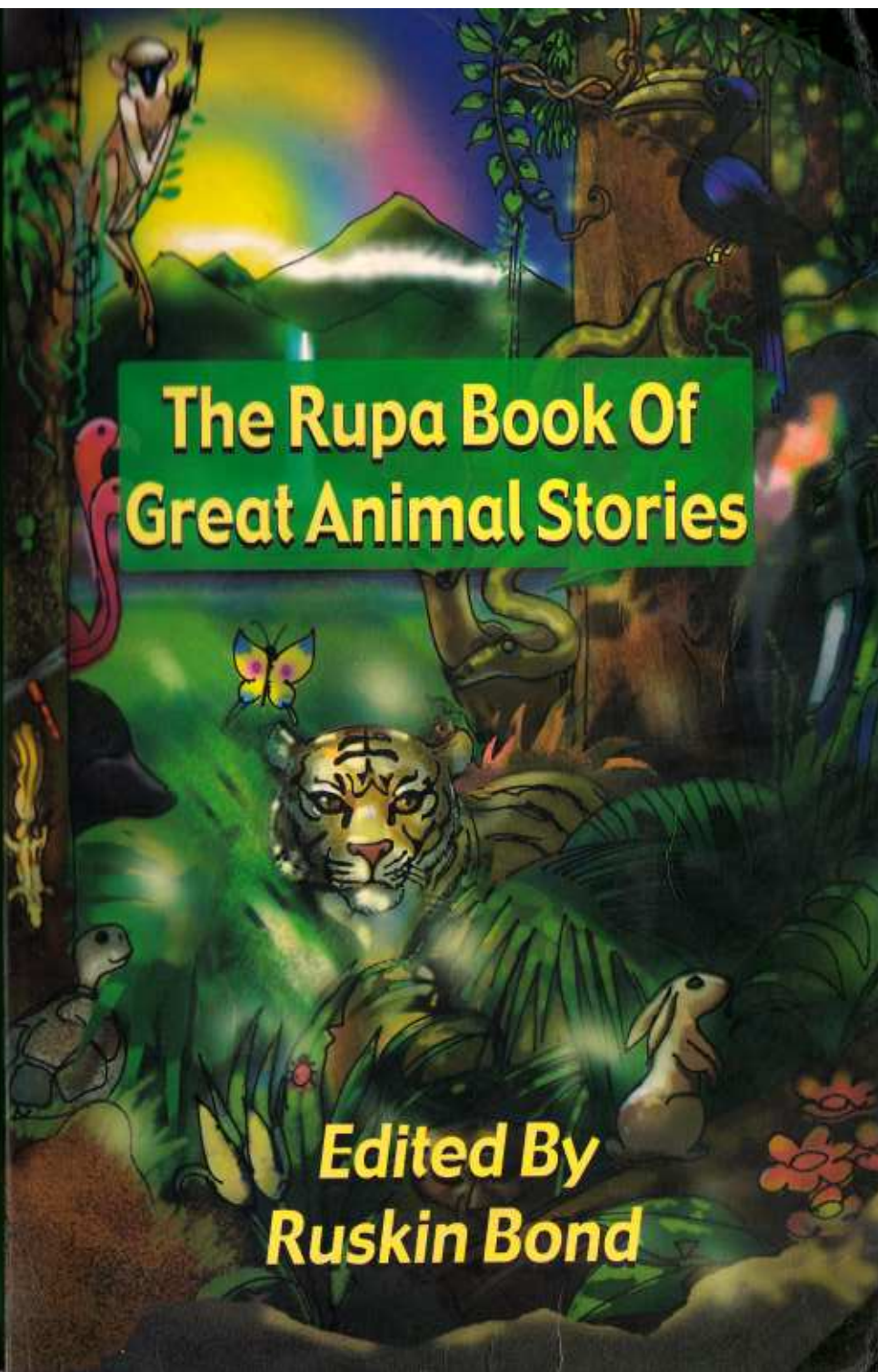
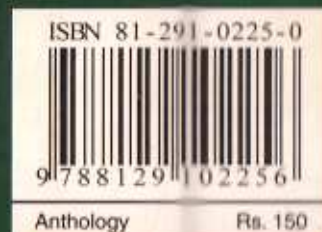


Here are exciting tales of hair-breadth escapes and thrilling encounters in the wild — stories of man's relationships with other living creatures, furred or feathered, fierce or friendly. All the stories were written out of the writers' own experiences. From thrilling encounters with man-eating tigers and crocodiles, to more friendly exchanges between man and beast, these stories will hold you spellbound.

Ruskin Bond, resident of Mussoorie, is a well-known writer of fiction and a raconteur par excellence. His *Tales and Legends from India*, *Angry River*, *Strange Men*, *Strange Places*, *The Blue Umbrella*, *A Long Walk for Bina* and *Hanuman to the Rescue* are also available in Rupa paperback. The *Ruskin Bond's Children's Omnibus* has been a firm favourite with young readers for several years. *Ghost Stories from the Raj* is one of his recent anthologies for Rupa.

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Prasanta Mukherji

A vibrant, colorful illustration of a jungle scene. In the center, a tiger with orange and black stripes looks directly at the viewer. To the left, a monkey hangs from a vine. Above the tiger, a butterfly with yellow and blue wings is visible. To the right, a small white rabbit is seen. The background features a large tree, a snake coiled around it, and a bright, colorful sky with a rainbow. The overall style is whimsical and detailed.

The Rupa Book Of Great Animal Stories

**Edited By
Ruskin Bond**

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Great
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RUSKIN BOND

Rupa & Co

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To

Upendra Arora

*a bookseller who cares about books,
and who has been specially helpful
and supportive to this writer.*

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Introduction

Would you rather be devoured by a man-eating tiger or eaten by a crocodile? The former might be a quicker and less painful procedure. Crocodiles are apt to linger over their meals.

Alternatively, you can be strangled and swallowed by a boa-constrictor, stung to death by wild bees, or trampled by a rampaging elephant. The choice is yours.

The stories in this collection cover all these possibilities!

There was a time when men roamed the earth in smaller numbers than they do today. They were hunters who killed for food or in self-defence. Sometimes they were the hunted, falling prey to wild animals who had the advantage of unlimited forest cover and swampland. Apart from that, the weapons used by early man were not very sophisticated.

Barely two centuries ago, the vast majority of Indians and South Asians lived in rural areas, often on the edge of jungles, and they had to protect themselves not only from invading armies and bands of robbers but also from herds of wild elephants, packs of wolves, and large numbers of tigers, reptiles and other carnivores. Most villages were surrounded by some sort of fortification. For security, people travelled together in large groups or caravans. Seldom did anyone venture forth on his own.

Slowly, as human “civilisation” evolved and populations increased, villages became towns and towns became cities. The forest cover diminished. The animal world began retreating. Men began to hunt for recreation and trophies rather than just for food or self-protection. British and other European colonials posted in India and elsewhere felt they had to prove their manhood by “bagging” a tiger or bison or wild boar; they were often aided and abetted by local potentates. But by the end of the twentieth century, as many species disappeared, wiser counsels prevailed and we began to think in terms of protecting and preserving what was left of our wild life.

Most of the stories presented here date from the early and middle years of the last century, when man and beast met each other on what was almost an equal footing. They were often in conflict. Man, with his intelligence and fire-power, usually prevailed. But sometimes the beast got the upper hand ... as you will discover when you read these exciting stories and first-person accounts.

However, not all these accounts depict nature red in tooth and claw. We come across animals, wild or domestic, who have struck up great partnerships with humans: the moose who was befriended by a Canadian farmer; the loyal terrier in the Kipling story; C.H. Donald’s relationship with a bear-cub and a flying-squirrel. Wild creatures are not always our natural enemies: the leopard in my story is just one example. But we have become competitors in the struggle for survival. The more aggressive tiger, moving into India from the north-east, drove out the lion; we in turn have decimated the tiger.

This is a collection of realistic, true-to-life stories. I have not included stories about talking animals who engage in human dialogue. Real bears are far removed from cuddly Teddy Bears.

These stories have been chosen because they are rivetting to read: thrilling, moving, or humorous. They are essentially true stories. Even those that have been written in a fictional format are based on actual episodes or experiences. Most of them are set in India, but for variety I have included a few from other lands. My story of ‘The Regimental Myna’ is published here for the first time.

Ruskin Bond

October 2002

The Coming of the Tiger

by James S. Lee

In the year 1894, Mr. Lee, then twenty-two years of age, became mechanical engineer in a mining settlement on the north-east frontier of India. Here, he tells one of the many exciting adventures that befell him.

I was in grand form; I found life very interesting, for there was plenty of variety here. I have seen a man-eater, a tiger. Not only that, but I have smelt its foul breath on my face, and have almost felt its claws when reaching for me, within a few inches of my body. Yet I am still alive, but the memory of it will live with me forever. Those hours of fear were torture far more acute than any pain;

a mental torture which I never before realised was possible to be produced by fear. Yes, believe me, fear can be more agonising than bodily pain.

I was sleeping in my bed when I was awakened in the early hours of the morning by a coolie standing under my window, calling, "Sahib! Sahib!"

As soon as I awakened, I got up and went to the open window—a window which contained no glass; only a wooden-louvred shutter.

"Sahib, *harkul bund hai*," said the coolie, meaning, "The fan has stopped."

This was a very serious matter. I knew that there were more than a hundred men and women working underground on the night shift, and soon the air underground would be unbreathable, and work would have to stop. The fan must be got going at once. I got up and dressed quickly, meanwhile sending the coolie for one of my fitters, who had a hut just below my compound.

Lukai, the fitter, an old man something like an Egyptian mummy in appearance, came up to my compound, carrying a hurricane lamp and a large pipe wrench, while the coolie fireman followed carrying some tools.

It was no joke, really, for we had to walk about half a mile through the jungle before we got to the fan, which was situated in an isolated spot, right in the heart of the jungle, and high up the hillside.

I was always scared on this trip at night-time, and I had made it a few times under similar conditions; the fan had a

habit of stopping sometimes at night. It might be the feed pump of the boiler which had gone wrong, or perhaps the coolie had allowed the water to get out of sight in the gauge glass, when he would get scared, draw the fire, and come down for a fitter.

I was scared because the jungle was known to be infested by tigers and leopards, and many natives had been killed at one time or another in the district.

As we walked along the winding path up the side of the hill, with thick jungle on either side, the old man was fairly trembling, and muttering to himself: "*Khun roj Bargh kyh-ager*," which means literally, "Some day tiger eat."

The coolie was the only one of us who appeared not to be afraid, but then perhaps he had no imagination; he was a poor specimen of humanity; naked, with the exception of a loin-cloth, and coal black, with spindle legs and big feet; and his face and arms were covered with syphilitic sores.

I could certainly have taken my rifle with me, but it would not have been much protection at night-time.

A tiger could spring out on us before I could use it, or a leopard could jump down on us out of a tree as we passed underneath; besides, I knew that I would come in for a good deal of chaff from the other Europeans. I carried a hunting knife only.

Although I reckoned that the chances of us meeting a tiger were about 100 to 1 against, this did not seem to help much.

Arrived at the spot I proceeded to investigate.

The place was a levelled and cleared portion of the hillside towering above us. Here, there was a horizontal engine and a large vertical boiler, standing on a massive concrete foundation, and driving, by means of a leather belt, the fan, which was built in the hillside. In front of me the jungle sloped away steeply down to the valley below.

The boiler fire was out, and the steam had fallen to a few pounds pressure, and steam and water were leaking into the furnace.

I knew that there was a tube leaking, probably the uptake tube. It was a very old boiler and all I could do was to make a temporary repair.

Leaving Lukai and the coolie to blow off the water and take off the manhole cover, I proceeded down the hill by a different route to the mine entrance, to see the foreman miner, and tell him to withdraw the coolies; the repair would take the rest of the night to make.

By the time I got back, I found that they had got the water blown off, and the manhole opened, leaving an opening into the boiler several feet above the ground.

They had a ladder placed against the boiler, and Lukai was on the domed roof, taking off the chimney, while the coolie was down below raking out the ashes, and taking out the fire-bars, so that I could stand upright when inside the furnace. The interior was still hot, so we started to partly fill the boiler with cold water as high as the furnace crown, on which we would have to stand when inside the steam space.

Although we had thrown buckets of cold water all round inside the furnace door, the interior was also fairly hot and stifling when I crept inside with a small lamp.

Meanwhile, Lukai got into the boiler through the manhole overhead, and between us we located the leak. As I expected, it was a small leak through the uptake tube. It had worn thin just there. Really it was dangerous, but as it would take a week to get another boiler up, and we could not stop the mine working, I had to patch it up as quickly as I could.

I next got in the manhole beside Lukai, and while he held the lamp, I punched a round chisel or drift through the leak until I had made a round hole large enough for a half-inch bolt to pass through.

This done, we got outside and found two pieces of plate of about two inches square, with a hole through the centre of each, for the bolt to pass through. These plates or washers were slightly curved, so as to fit the tube.

Wrapping the neck of the bolt with spunyarn, and covering it with red and white lead, I threaded on a plate, first passing the second piece of plate up to Lukai, who had climbed into the manhole.

Again, getting inside the firedoor, I reached up the tube, and pushed the bolt through the hole, until the plate, well-covered with lead and spunyarn, was pressing firmly against the tube.

Lukai now threaded his piece of plate on to the bolt from the other side of the tube, first well leading and wrapping it;

and all that now required to be done, was for him to put on the nut and tighten up, so that the leak would be tightly gripped by the plates, inside and outside.

Just then I heard the coolie scream, and saw his legs and feet scampering up the ladder.

He was now on top of the boiler shouting, "*Bargh*" ("tiger").

The sudden realisation of my position now struck me for the first time. I was trapped like a rat in a trap. I was on the ground level, and there was an open hole into the chamber.

Could the tiger reach me with its claws, through the open door? I felt that it could, and I knew then real fear, such as few people ever experience.

Thoughts raced through my brain, quickly following one another. I thought of our relative positions.

The coolie was on top of the boiler, high up out of reach of the tiger, and therefore safe. Lukai was inside the boiler, and the only opening into this part was the manhole, and this was several feet above the ground. He was fairly safe I thought, because the tiger could not climb up the smooth steel side. My position was the only one which was dangerous. I could now hear it moving about outside, and once or twice I caught a glimpse of its stripes, as it passed the door opening, because the night was not dark, the stars were shining above us.

The creature evidently had not yet discovered my presence, and was concentrating its attention on the coolie above.

It moved in silence, and both Lukai and the coolie were now silent.

Suddenly, with a terrible snarl, it sprang upwards, and I could hear its claws rasping on the steel plate as it slipped back. Its rage and snarls were now horrible, and all the time I was pressing myself back against the far side of the boiler as hard as I could.

Could it reach me when it discovered my presence?

I measured the distance with my eye, and I felt more hopeful.

Suddenly the snarling stopped, and I saw its head at the opening. It had found me.

First it tried to force itself through the door, but it could only get its head through, and its fangs soon were snapping within a couple of feet of my body. Its breath came in horrid, foul gusts, filling the chamber with a sickening odour, and its roars inside the confined space were enough to hurt my ear drums, while its eyes were glaring into mine.

I stood there fascinated with horror.

I now knew that it could not reach me that way, but would it start reaching in with its claws? My imagination now began to visualise its claws reaching me, and speculating as to what part of me it would rip up first. The constriction on my heart had almost become like a physical pain. Just then I heard something strike the boiler plate with a loud clang. Lukai had thrown his hammer. Of course. How foolish of me! I had forgotten my hunting knife, which was in my belt. I would wait until it put its head in again, and then try and jab the blade through its eye into the brain.

Now it was reaching for me with its paw through the door opening, and its claws came within a few inches of my body,

opening and shutting in a horrible manner. It could not reach me, but I knew that if it had the intelligence of a human being, it would reach in sideways, and then all would soon be over.

It was too dangerous to try and slash its paw, besides, it would do little good. I would wait.

Again, it had got its head in the opening and I raised my knife, but found that its teeth followed my hand, and it was risky to strike, because it was snapping all the time. Its top lip was lifted, exposing fangs which seemed enormous, and its whiskers were trembling with rage.

Then I struck with all the suddenness I was capable of. I had missed, and the knife only slashed down its nose, because its head had moved.

Quickly the tiger backed out with a roar. Its rage now was so terrible that it even bit at the plate of the door opening. It was behaving outside like a rampaging demon; lashing its tail and sometimes springing up at the coolie, who had now recovered his courage when he found himself beyond reach. Both he and Lukai were spitting and hissing and hurling abuse at it.

Once on its upward spring it got its paw in the manhole door opening and hung there a minute while the rest of its claws were slipping and rasping on the steel plates of the boiler side. Then Lukai brought his spanner down with all his force on its paw, nearly cutting it through on the sharp edge of the door opening.

Now the creature was almost insane with rage. It had first been hit by Lukai on the back with a hammer, then its nose

had been split by my knife, and lastly its paw had been nearly cut off by the last blow.

Presently it put its head in the fire door again, and, following Lukai's example, I struck it a heavy blow on the nose with my large hammer.

Now a tiger's nose is a very tender and sensitive spot, and it is intended to be so, because its whiskers have to guide it through the thick undergrowth in the dark, and it feels the touch of any obstruction first through these, and then through its nose; consequently the pain must have been extremely acute, judging by the noise it made. It then bounded off into the jungle.

However, none of us ventured to leave our refuge before it was broad daylight, and in the meantime we completed the work.

Man-Eater

by Frank Buck with Edward Anthony

Frank Buck spent a great many years collecting live wild animals for zoos, circuses, and dealers. He was famous for his early "Bring 'Em Back Alive" documentary films. In the following story he tells of the capture of a huge tiger at Johore, for an American Zoo.

In 1926, I was again in Singapore putting the finishing touches to a splendid collection. My compound was fairly bursting with fine specimens. I had brought back from Siam a fine assortment of argus pheasants, fireback pheasants, and many small cage birds. Out of Borneo I had come with a goodly gang of man-like orang-utans and other apes. From

Sumatra I had emerged with some fat pythons and a nice group of porcupines, binturongs, and civet cats. Celebes had yielded an imposing array of parrots, cockatoos, lories (brush-tongued parrots of a gorgeous colourings)—one of the biggest shipments of these birds I had ever made. My trip to Burmah was represented by a couple of black leopards (more familiarly known as panthers), several gibbons, and a sizeable army of small rhesus monkeys. In addition, I had a number of other specimens picked up along the line.

I was to sail for San Francisco in a couple of weeks. This meant that I would have to make a thorough inspection of my crates and cages to make sure they were all in shape to stand the rigours of a thirty-five-or forty-day trip across the Pacific.

With Hin Mong, the Chinese carpenter who had served me for years, I made the rounds of the various boxes, he making notes of new cages and crates that were needed.

His cleverness knows no bounds. Working with a home-made saw, crude chisel made out of a scrap of iron shaped and sharpened on a grind-stone, and a few other primitive tools, he does carpentry that is as finished as if it came out of an up-to-date shop equipped with the finest of tools. Some of it, in fact, is finer than any carpenter work I have ever seen done anywhere. With a couple of chow-boys (apprentices) to assist him, Hin Mong would pitch into any task to which I assigned him and when it was done it was a piece of work to be proud of.

The owner of the house in Katong where I usually lived when in Singapore had sold it, making it necessary for me to

move out, although I still maintained my compound there. After the sale of the house I invariably stayed at the Raffles Hotel when in Singapore. I had just returned to my room there after an early morning session with Hin Mong, in the course of which we made a final inspection of the crates and cages, when I was informed that the Sultan of Johore was on the telephone and wished to speak to me at once. Whenever the Sultan telephoned, the information that he was on the wire was passed on to me with much ceremony, sometimes my good friend Aratoon, one of the owners of the hotel, announcing the news in person.

As the morning was still young I was puzzled, for it was most unusual for H.H. to telephone so early. It was a very serious H.H. that spoke to me. He got to his business without any loss of time. Did I still want a man-eating tiger? Well, here was my chance. Breathlessly he told me that a coolie on a rubber plantation twenty-five miles north of Johore Bahru had been seized by a tiger while at work and killed. The animal, a man-eater, had devoured part of the body. Work, of course, was at a standstill on the plantation. The natives were in a state of terror. He (the Sultan) was sending an officer and eight soldiers to war on the killer. It was necessary to show some action at once to ease the minds of his frightened subjects. If I thought I could catch the man-eater alive he would be glad to place the officer and soldiers under my command, with instructions to do my bidding. If, after looking over the situation, it became apparent that in trying to capture the killer alive, we were

taking a chance of losing him, he expected me to have the beast immediately shot. He wanted no effort spared in locating the animal. There would be no peace in the minds and hearts of his subjects in the district where the outrage was committed until the cause was removed. In a series of crisp sentences the Sultan got the story off his chest. This was an interesting transition from his lighter manner, the vein in which I most frequently saw him.

Needless to say I leaped at the opportunity to try for a man-eater. H.H. asked me to join him at the fort over in Johore Bahru, which I agreed to do without delay.

At the fort, which is the military headquarters for the State to Johore, the Sultan introduced me to the officer he had selected to assist me, a major with a good record as a soldier and a hunter. He was a quiet little chap, so well-mannered that his courtesy almost seemed exaggerated. (The Malays, by the way, are the best-mannered people in Asia.) His soldiers were a likely looking contingent. It was obvious that H.H. had picked good men to help me with the job.

The major was not in uniform. He was dressed in ordinary rough clothes of European cut. I was interested in the rifle he carried. It was a Savage.303, which most hunters consider too small a gun for tiger-shooting. This capable Malay, however, had killed several tigers with this weapon, the Sultan told me. It took a good man to do that.

The major's command were dressed in the khaki shirts and "shorts" affected by Malay soldiers. They wore heavy stockings

that resembled golf hose. If not for the little black Mohammedan caps on their heads and their weapons—(each was armed with a big sword-like knife and a Malayan military rifle)—they might have been taken for a group of boy scouts. A cartridge-belt around each man's waist topped off the war-like note.

The major bowed two or three times and announced in his fairly good English that he was ready to start. We departed, the officer and his men piling into a small motor lorry, Ali and I following in my car. The asphalt roads of Johore are excellent—many of them the work of American road-builders who did a wonderful job of converting stretches of wilderness into fine highways—and we were able to motor to within three miles of the killing. The rest of the journey we made on foot over a jungle trail.

I had requested the Sultan to order the body of the slain coolie left where it was when the killer had finished his work. When we arrived we found a group of excited natives standing around the mangled remains. One leg had been eaten off to the thigh. The animal had also consumed the better part of one shoulder, and to give the job an added touch of thoroughness had gouged deeply into the back of the neck.

Other groups of natives were standing around not far from the body, some of them hysterically jabbering away, some making weird moaning noises, others staring down at the ground in silence. One has to have a good comprehension of the wild world-old superstitions of these natives to appreciate fully what happens inside them when a man-eating tiger appears. All the

fanaticism that goes with their belief in strange devils and ogres finds release when a tiger, their enemy of enemies, kills a member of their ranks. They act like a people who consider themselves doomed. Going into a delirium of fear that leaves them weak and spiritless, they become as helpless as little children. Under a strong leadership that suggests a grand unconcern about man-eating tigers, they can be rallied to work against the striped foe; but, until there are definite signs of a possible victory, this work is purely mechanical. The most casual glance reveals that each member of the terrified crew is staring hard at the jungle as he perfunctorily goes through the motions of doing whatever it is you assign him to.

An investigation revealed that the victim of the tiger had been working on a rubber tree when attacked. His tapping knife and latex cup (in which he caught the latex, or sap) were just where they had dropped from his hands when the poor devil was surprised, mute evidence of the suddenness of the assault. Then he had been dragged fifteen or twenty yards into some nearby brush.

Bordering along the jungle wall—as dense and black a stretch of jungle, incidentally, as I have ever seen—was a small pineapple plantation. This was not a commercial grove, but a modest affair cultivated by the estate coolies for their own use. An examination of the ground here revealed marks in the dirt that unmistakably were tiger tracks. The tiger's spoor led to a fence made by the natives to keep out wild pigs, whose fondness for pineapples had spelled the ruin of more than one plantation. Through a hole

in this fence—which could have easily been made by the tiger or might have been there when he arrived, the work of some other animal—the killer's movements could, without the exercise of much ingenuity, be traced in the soft earth across the pineapple grove into the coal-black jungle some fifty yards away.

It is no news that a tiger, after gorging himself on his kill, will return to devour the unfinished remains of his feast. If there is no heavy brush within convenient reach he will camouflage those remains with leaves and anything else that is handy for his purpose and go off to his lair. Confident that he has covered his left-over skilfully enough to fool even the smartest of the vultures, jackals, hyenas, and wild dogs, he curls up and enjoys one of those wonderful long sleeps that always follow a good bellyful and which I have always believed to be as much a part of the joy of making a good kill as the actual devouring of it.

I felt, as I studied the situation, that when the tiger returned for the rest of his kill—assuming that this creature would follow regulation lines and re-visit the scene of the slaughter—he would again make use of that hole in the fence. It was a perfectly simple conclusion. Either the animal would not return at all or if he returned he would re-travel his former route.

"*Changkuls! Changkuls! Changkuls!*" I yelled as soon as I decided on a course of action. A *changkul* is a native implement that is widely used on the rubber plantations. It is a combination of shovel and hoe. With the assistance of the major I managed to make it clear to the natives what it was I wanted them to do.

My plan was to dig a hole barely within the borders of the pineapple plantation, so close to the hole in the fence through which the tiger had travelled on his first visit that if he returned and used the same route he would go tumbling down a pit from which there was no return—except in a cage.

I specified a hole four feet by four feet at the surface. This was to be dug fourteen or fifteen feet deep, the opening widening abruptly at about the half-way mark until at the very bottom it was to be a subterranean room ten feet across.

Soon we had a sizable gang of natives working away with the *changkuls*. The helpful major, to whom I had given instructions for the pit that was now being dug, bowed a sporting acquiescence to my plan when I knew full well that this accomplished *shikari* who had brought down many tigers with the rifle was aching to go forth into the jungle in quest of the man-eater.

The pit finished, we covered the top with nipa palms. Then we made away with the pile of dirt we had excavated, scattering it at a distance so that the tiger, if he returned, would see no signs of fresh soil. The body was left where it was.

Ali then returned with me to Johore Bahru where I planned to stay overnight at the rest-house adjoining the United Service Club. Before leaving, I placed the soldiers on guard at the coolie lines with instructions to keep the natives within those lines.

The coolie lines on a rubber plantation correspond to the headquarters of a big ranch in this country. There is a row of shacks in which the natives live, a store where they buy their

provisions, etc. My idea was to give the tiger every possible chance to return. Too much activity near the stretch of ground where the body lay might have made him over-cautious.

Early the next morning the soldiers were to examine the pit. If luck was with us and the tiger was a prisoner, a Chinese boy on the estate who owned a bicycle that he had learned to ride at a merry clip was to head for the nearest military post—(there is a whole series of them, very few jungle crossroads in Johore being without one)—and notify the authorities who in turn would immediately communicate with the fort at Johore Bahru.

The next morning no word had been received at the fort. At noon I drove back to the rubber plantation to see if there was anything I could do. The situation was unchanged. There was no signs of the tiger. No one had seen him, not even the most imaginative native with a capacity for seeing much that was not visible to the normal eye.

The body of the mangled native was decomposing. Though I did not like to alter my original plan, I acquiesced when the natives appealed to me to let them give their fallen comrade a Mohammedan burial (the Malay version thereof). They put the body in a box and carried it off for interment.

The major did not conceal his desire to go off into the jungle with his men to seek the killer there. He was characteristically courteous, bowing politely as he spoke, and assuring me that he had nothing but respect for my plan. Yes, the *tuan's* idea was a good one—doubtless, it might prove

successful under different circumstances—but it was not meeting with any luck, and would I consider him too bold if he suggested beating about the nearby jungle with his men in an effort to trace the eater of the coolie?

What could I say? My plan had not accomplished anything and we were no closer to catching our man-eater than when we first got to work. I readily assented, stipulating only that the pit remain as it was, covered with nipa palms and ready for a victim—though if the animal returned after the number of hours that had elapsed, it would be performing freakishly.

There was no point in my staying there. So, when the major went off into the jungle with his men, I left the scene, returning to Singapore with Ali. I still had considerable work to do before the big collection of animals and birds in my compound would be ready for shipment to America.

I felt upset all the way back to Singapore. Here was the first chance I had ever had to take a man-eating tiger and I had failed. Perhaps I was not at fault—after all, the business of capturing animals is not an exact science—but just the same I was returning without my man-eater and I was bitterly disappointed. Ali did his best to cheer me up, but all he succeeded in doing was to remind me over and over again that I had failed. Using words sparingly and gestures freely, he tried to communicate the idea that after all a man could worry through life without a man-eating tiger. In an effort to change the expression on my face he grinned like an ape and made movements with his hands designed, I am sure, to convey the

idea of gaiety. He was not helping a bit. Feeling that I was too strongly resisting his efforts to buck me up, he grew peeved and resorted to his old trick of wrinkling up his nose. This drew from me the first laugh I had had in several days. Seeing me laugh, Ali broke into a laugh too, wrinkling up his nose a few times more by way of giving me a thoroughly good time.

When we returned to Singapore I kept in touch with the situation by telephone, the fort reporting that though the major and his men had combed every inch of the jungle for some distance around, they found no trace of the killer. The major gave it as his opinion that the beast had undoubtedly left the district and that further search would accomplish nothing.

"Well, that's that," I said to myself as I prepared to busy myself in the compound with the many tasks that were waiting for me there.

The third day, very early in the morning, just as I was beginning to dismiss from my mind the events that had taken place on that rubber plantation, I received a telegram from the Sultan of Johore which, with dramatic suddenness, announced that the tiger had dropped into the pit! No one knew exactly when. "Some time last night." Would I hurry to the plantation with all possible haste? He had tried to reach me by phone and failing this had sent a fast telegram.

Would I? What a question! Perhaps it is unnecessary for me to say how delighted I was over the prospect of returning to the plantation to get my man-eating tiger. Ali ran me a close

second, the old boy's joy (much of it traceable to my own, no doubt, for Ali was usually happy when I was) being wonderful to behold.

We climbed into the car and set out for the plantation at a terrific clip. At least half the way we travelled at the rate of seventy miles an hour, very good work for the battered bus I was driving.

When we arrived, the natives were packed deep around the sides of the pit. Never have I witnessed such a change in morale. There was no suggestion of rejoicing—for the natives endow tigers with supernatural powers and they do not consider themselves safe in the presence of one unless he is dead or inside a cage—but they were again quick in their movements. A determined looking crew, they could now be depended upon for real assistance.

In addition to the crowd of coolies, the group near the pit included the major and his soldiers and a white man and his wife from a nearby plantation. The woman, camera in hand, was trying to take a picture. Even in the wilds of Johore one is not safe from invasion by those terrible amateurs to whom nothing means anything but the occasion for taking another picture. I distinctly recall that one of my first impulses on arriving on the scene was to heave the lady to the tiger and then toss in her chatterbox of a husband for good measure. This no doubt established a barbarous strain in me.

I ploughed my way through the crowd to the mouth of the pit. The natives had rolled heavy logs over the opening, driven heavy stakes and lashed the cover down with rattan.

"*Apa ini?*" I inquired. "*Apa ini?*" [What is this?]

"Oh, *tuan!* *Harimu besar!*" came the chorused reply, the gist of it being that our catch was a "great, big, enormous tiger." I loosened a couple of the logs, making an opening through which I could peer down into the pit. Stretching out on my stomach, I took a look at the prisoner below, withdrawing without the loss of much time when the animal, an enormous creature, made a terrific lunge upward, missing my face with his paw by not more than a foot.

This was all I needed to convince me that the natives had shown intelligence in covering the mouth of the pit with those heavy logs. I did not believe that the beast could have escaped if the covering was not there; yet he was of such a tremendous size that it was barely possible he could pull himself out by sinking his claws into the side of the pit after taking one of those well-nigh incredible leaps.

The business of getting that tiger out of the pit presented a real problem. This was due to his size. I had not calculated on a monster like this, a great cat that could leap upward to within a foot of the mouth of the pit.

Ordinarily it is not much of a job to get a tiger out of a pit. After baiting it with a couple of fresh killed chickens, a cage with a perpendicular slide door is lowered. An assistant holds a rope which when released drops the door and makes the tiger a captive as soon as he decides to enter the cage for the tempting morsels within, which he will do when he becomes sufficiently hungry. A variation on this procedure, though not

as frequently used, is to lower a box without a bottom over the tiger. This is arduous labour, requiring plenty of patience, but it is a method that can be employed successfully when the circumstances are right. When you have the box over the tiger and it is safely weighted down, you drop into the pit, slip a sliding bottom under the box and yell to the boys overhead to haul away at the ropes.

It was obvious that neither of these methods would do in this case. I simply could not get around the fact that I had under-estimated the size of the man-eater and had not ordered a deep enough pit. Our catch was so big that if we lowered a box he could scramble to the top of it in one well-aimed leap and jump out of the hole in another. Ordinary methods would not do. They were too dangerous.

I finally hit upon a plan, and, as a good part of the morning was still ahead of us, I decided to tear back to Singapore for the supplies I needed and race back post-haste and get that striped nuisance out of the pit that day. I could not afford to spend much more time on the plantation. I had so much work waiting for me in connection with that big shipment I was taking to the United States.

My first move on arriving in Singapore was to get hold of Hin Mong and put him and his chow-boys to work at once on a special long, narrow box with a slide door at one end. When I left for my next stop, Mong and his boys had cast aside all other tasks and were excitedly yanking out lumber for my emergency order. Knowing this Chinese carpenter's fondness

for needless little fancy touches, I assailed his ears before departing with a few emphatic words to the effect that this was to be a plain job and that he was not to waste any time on the frills so dear to his heart.

Leaving Mong's I headed for the bazaars, where I bought three or four hundred feet of strong native rope made of jungle fibres. Next I went to the Harbour Works and borrowed a heavy block-and-tackle. Then I hired a motor truck.

When I added to this collection an ordinary Western lasso, which I learned to use as a boy in Texas, I was ready to return to the rubber plantation for my tiger. While on the subject of that lasso, it might be appropriate to point out that the public gave Buffalo Jones one long horse laugh when he announced his intention of going to Africa and roping big game, and that not long afterwards the laugh was on the public, for Buffalo serenely proceeded to do exactly what he said he would. I have never gone in for that sort of thing, but my rope, which is always kept handy, has been useful many times, even a crane, a valuable specimen, having been lassoed on the wing as it sailed out over the ship's side after a careless boy had left its shipping box open.

When the box was made—and though Hin Mong and his chow-boys threw it together hastily, it was a good strong piece of work—I loaded it and the coil of rope and the block-and-tackle on to the truck and sent this freight on its way to the rubber plantation, putting it in charge of Ali's nephew, who was then acting as his uncle's assistant at the compound. I gave him a driver and two other boys and sent them on their journey

after Ali had given his nephew instructions on how to reach the rubber plantation. Four boys were needed to carry the supplies the three miles from the end of the road through the jungle trail to the plantation.

My own car, which had carried Ali and me on so many other important trips, carried us again. Our only baggage was my lasso, which I had dropped on the floor of this speedy but badly mutilated conveyance of mine that for want of a better name I called an automobile.

As I had not seen the Sultan since the day he turned his major and those eight soldiers over to me, I decided to drop in on him on the way to the rubber plantation.

Having learned he was at the fort, I headed for these glorified barracks, where H.H. greeted me effusively. He came out of the fort as we pulled up, leaning over the side of the car. Two or three times he congratulated me on my success in getting the tiger into the pit. Then, very solemnly—and for half a second I did not realise that he had reverted to his bantering manner—he said, “Glad you stop here before you go take tiger from pit. I would never forgive you if you did not say good-bye before tiger eat you.”

Laughing, I told H.H., whose eyes were resting on the lasso at the bottom of the car, “You don't seem very confident, do you?”

“Confident?” came the reply. “Sure! You going to catch tiger with rope like cowboy, no? Very simple, this method, no? Very simple. Why you don't try catch elephant this way too? Very

simple," Then the Sultan broke into one of those hearty roars of his, slapping his thighs as he doubled up with laughter.

"Don't you think I can do it, H.H.?" I asked.

Tactfully, he declined to answer with a yes or a no. All he said was, "This is tiger, not American cow," This was more eloquent than a dozen noes.

"I'll tell you what, H.H.," I said. "I'll make a little bet with you, just for the fun of it. I'll bet you a bottle of champagne that I'll have that tiger alive in Johore Bahru before the sun goes down." H.H. never could be induced to make a wager for money with a friend; that's why I stipulated wine.

"I bet you," he grinned. "But how I can collect if tiger eat you?" (Turning to Ali with mock sternness.) "Ali, you do not forget that your *tuan* owe me bottle champagne if he do not come back!" Then he exploded into another one of those body-shaking laughs of his.

We were off in a few minutes. Clouds were gathering overhead and it looked like rain. I wanted to get my job over with before the storm broke. Stepping on the gas, I waved a good-bye to H.H., and we were on our way.

I was worried by the overcast skies, but I did not regard the impending storm as a serious obstacle. It looked like a "Sumatra," a heavy rain and wind-storm of short duration, followed by bright sunshine that always seems freakish to those who do not know the East. The chief difficulty imposed by the storm, in the event that it broke, would be the slippery footing that would result. A secondary problem would be the stiffening of

the ropes. Rope, when it has been well exposed to rain, hardens somewhat, although it can be handled. If it rained, my job would be so much tougher.

We tore along at maximum speed, my engine heralding our approach all along the line with a mighty roar. Considering the terrific racket, I had a right to expect the speedometer to indicate a new speed record instead of a mere seventy an hour. My bus always got noisy when I opened her up, reminding me of a terrier trying to bark like a St. Bernard.

The skies grew darker as we raced along and when we were a short distance from the point where it was necessary to complete the journey on foot, a light rain started to fall. By the time we were half-way to the plantation it was raining hard and Ali and I were nicely drenched when we arrived.

The rain had driven many of the coolies to cover, but at least a score of them were still standing around when we pulled up. The major and his soldiers, soaked to the skin, stood by faithfully, the major even taking advantage of this inopportune moment to congratulate me again—(he had done it before)—on my trapping of the man-eater. I appreciated this sporting attitude after the failure of his search in the jungle. However, I did not feel very triumphant. The tough part of the job was ahead of me. Getting a tiger out of a pit into a cage in a driving rainstorm is dangerous, strenuous work.

I got busy at once. Taking out my knife, I began cutting my coil of native rope into extra nooses. This done, I knocked aside some of the stakes that secured the pit's cover, rolled away

some of the logs, and, stretching out flat with my head and shoulders extending out over the hole, began to make passes at the roaring enemy below with my lasso rope. One advantage of the rain was that it weakened the tiger's footing, making it impossible for him to repeat the tremendous leap upward he had made earlier in the day when I took my first look down the pit. As I heard him sloshing around in the mud and water at the bottom of his prison, I felt reassured. If the rain put me at a disadvantage, it did the same thing to the enemy.

With the major standing by, rifle ready for action, I continued to fish for the tiger with my rope, the black skies giving me bad light by which to work. Once I got the lay of the land I managed to drop the rope over the animal's head, but before I could pull up the slack—the rain had made the rope “slow”—he flicked it off with a quick movement of the paw. A second time I got it over his head, but this time his problem was even easier for the fore-part of the stiffening slack landed close enough to his mouth to enable him to bite the rope in two with one snap. Making a new loop in the lasso I tried over and over but he either eluded my throw or fought free of the noose with lightning-fast movements in which teeth and claws worked together in perfect co-ordination as he snarled his contempt for my efforts. The rain continued to come down in torrents. When it rains in Johore, it rains—an ordinary Occidental rain-storm being a mere sprinkle compared to an honest-to-goodness “Sumatra.”

By now I was so thoroughly drenched I no longer minded the rain on my body; it was only when the water dripped down into my eyes that I found myself growing irritated.

After working in this fashion for an hour till my shoulders ached from the awkward position I was in, I succeeded in looping a noose over the animal's head and through his mouth, using a fairly dry fresh rope that responded when I gave it a quick jerk. This accomplished my purpose, which was to draw the corners of his mouth inward so that his lips were stretched taut over his teeth, making it impossible for him to bite through the rope without biting through his lips. I yelled to the coolies who were standing by ready for action to tug away at the rope, which they did, pulling the crouching animal's head and forequarters clear of the bottom of the pit. This was the first good look at the foe I had had. The eyes hit me the hardest. Small for the enormous head, they glared an implacable hatred.

Quickly bringing another rope into play, I ran a second hitch around the struggling demon's neck, another group of coolies (also working under Ali's direction) pulling away at this rope from the side of the pit opposite the first ropehold. It was no trouble, with two groups of boys holding the animal's head and shoulders up, to loop a third noose under the forelegs and a fourth under the body. Working with feverish haste, I soon had eight different holds on the man-eater of Johore. With coolies tugging away at each line, we pulled the monster up nearly even with the top of the pit and held him there. His mouth, distorted with rage plus what the first rope was doing to it, was a hideous sight. With hind legs he was thrashing away furiously, also doing his frantic best to get his roped fore-legs into action.

I was about to order the lowering of the box when one of the coolies let out a piercing scream. He was Number One boy on the first rope. Looking around I saw that he had lost his footing in the slippery mud, and, in his frenzied efforts to save himself, was sliding head first for the mouth of the pit. I was in a position where I could grab him, but I went at it so hard that I lost my own footing and the two of us would have rolled over into the pit if Ali, who was following me around with an armful of extra nooses, hadn't quickly grabbed me and slipped one of these ropes between my fingers. With a quick tug, he and one of the soldiers pulled us out of danger.

The real menace, if the coolie and I had rolled over into the pit was that the other coolies would probably have lost their heads and let go the ropes. With them holding on there was no serious danger, for the tiger was firmly lashed.

I've wondered more than once what would have occurred if the native and I had gone splashing to the bottom of that hole. Every time I think of it, it gives me the creeps; for though the coolies at the ropes were dependable enough when their *tuan* was around to give them orders, they might easily have gone to pieces, as I've frequently seen happen, had they suddenly decided that they were leaderless. It wouldn't have been much fun at the bottom of the pit with this brute of a tiger.

The coolies shrieked but they held. The rain continued to come down in sheets and the ooze around the pit grew worse and worse. Self-conscious now about the slipperiness, the boys were finding it harder than ever to keep their feet.

The box would have to be lowered at once. With the tiger's head still almost even with the surface of the pit, we let the box down lengthwise, slide door end up. Unable to get too close, we had to manipulate the box with long poles. The hind legs had sufficient play to enable the animal to strike out with them, and time after time, after we painstakingly manoeuvred the cage into position with the open slide door directly under him, our enraged captive would kick it away. In the process the ropes gave a few inches, indicating that the strain was beginning to be too much for the boys. If we were forced to let the animal drop back after getting him to this point, it was a question if we'd ever be able to get him out alive.

Quickly I went over the situation with Ali. I was growing desperate. With the aid of the major and three of his soldiers we got the box firmly in place, the tired boys at the ropes responding to a command to tug away that lifted the animal a few inches above the point where his thrashing hind legs interfered with keeping it erect. I assigned the three soldiers to keeping the box steady with poles which they braced against it. If we shifted the box again in the ooze we might lose our grip on it, so I cautioned them to hold it as it was.

"Major, I'm now leaving matters in your hands," I said. "See that the boys hold on and keep your rifle ready." Before he had a chance to reply I let myself down into the pit, dodging the flying back feet. Covered with mud from head to foot as a result of my dropping into the slime, I grabbed the tiger by his tail, swung him directly over the opening of the box and fairly

roared: "Let go!" Let go they did, with me leaning on the box to help steady it.

The man-eater of Johore dropped with a bang to the bottom of Hin Mong's plainest box. I slid the door to with a slam, leaned against it and bellowed for hammer and nails. I could feel the imprisoned beast pounding against the sides of his cell as he strove to free himself from the tangle of ropes around him. His drop, of necessity, had folded up his hind legs and I didn't see how he could right himself sufficiently in that narrow box for a lunge against the door at the top; but the brute weighed at least three hundred pounds, and if his weight shifted over against me he might, in my tired condition, knock me over and——

"Get the hammer and nails!" I screamed. "Damn it, hurry up!" I leaned against the box with all my strength, pressing it against one side of the pit to hold the sliding door firmly closed.

No hammer! No nails!

Plastered with mud, my strength rapidly ebbing, I was in a fury over the delay.

"*Kasi pacoo!* [Bring nails!]" I shrieked in Malay, in case my English was not understood. "Nails! *Pacco!* Nails" I cried. "And a hammer, you helpless swine!" There weren't any swine present but that's what I called every one at the moment. I felt the tiger's weight shifting against me and I was mad with desperation.

The major yelled down that no one could find the nails. The can had been kicked over and the nails were buried in

the mud. They had the hammer. ... Here she goes! I caught it. ... What the hell good is a hammer without nails?

"Give me nails, damn it, or I'll murder the pack of you!"

It was Ali who finally located the nails, buried in the mud, after what seemed like a week and was probably a couple of minutes. Over the side of the pit he scrambled to join me in a splash of mud. With a crazy feverishness I wielded the hammer while Ali held the nails in place, and at last Johore's coolie-killer was nailed down fast. Muffled snarls and growls of rage came through the crevices, left for breathing space.

Then I recall complaining to Ali that the storm must be getting worse. It was getting blacker. The *tuan* was wrong. The storm was letting up. Perhaps I mistook the mud that splashed over me as I fell to the floor of the pit, too weak to stand up, for extra heavy raindrops.

Ali lifted me to my feet and my brain cleared. I suddenly realised that the job was all done, that the man-eater of Johore was in that nailed-down box. I was overjoyed. Only a man in my field can fully realise the thrill I experienced over the capture of this man-eating tiger—the first, to my knowledge, ever brought to the United States.

Ropes were fastened around the box—(no one feared entering the pit now)—and with the aid of the block-and-tackle, our freight was hauled out of the hole.

Eight coolies were needed to get our capture back through the slime that was once a dry jungle trail to the highway leading to Johore Bahru. More than once they almost dropped their

load, which they bore on carrying poles, as they skidded around in the three miles of sticky muck between the rubber plantation and the asphalt road which now reflected the sunlight, wistfully reappearing in regulation fashion after the rain and wind of the “Sumatra.” There we loaded the box on to the waiting lorry, which followed Ali and me in my car.

About forty minutes later as the sun bathed the channel in the reddish glow of its vanishing rays, I planted the man-eater under the nose of the Sultan in front of the United Service Club in Johore Bahru.

With more mud on me than any one that ever stood at the U.S.C.’s bar, I collected my bet, the hardest-earned champagne I ever tasted.

The Sultan was so respectful after I won this wager that once or twice I almost wished I hadn’t caught his damned man-eater. H.H. is much more fun when he’s not respectful. I enjoyed his pop-eyed felicitations but not nearly so much as some of the playful digs he’s taken at me.

The man-eater of Johore, by the way, eventually wound up in the Longfellow Zoological Park, in Minneapolis, Minn.

The Pale One

by John Eyton

Chapter 1

‘**T**he Pale One’ was one of the most mysterious creatures in the world—a she-elephant, queen of her herd and of the vast jungles wherein they moved. Her kingdom stretched from the blue Nilgiri Hills, through leagues of rugged hillocks clothed in scrub, to the dense jungles on the Cauvery’s banks. She and her kind had but little to do with the works of man, save for the occasional descent on a village at the jungle edge, when they would maraud a few fields for fodder; sometimes too in the dusk, on the Ootacamund road or on the way to Mercara, men would see great shadowy forms ahead of them, and would flee—but she was hardly aware of man at all.

Perhaps her colour had attracted the great Tusker, who had wandered alone in the forests of Coorg until a bullet drove him from his old haunts into the jungle by the river. One evening he saw the herd at drinking, and challenged at once, stamping and roaring and calling their ancient leader—the giant of the One Tusk—to battle; then all night he wandered round the bamboo brake, trumpeting defiance. In the morning the memorable battle started, which lasted three days and determined, in sight of all, the leadership of the herd. The jungle folk kept away; even the tiger and the buffalo avoided the battle-ground, where trees were uprooted and pounded into the floor; where the very forest swayed to the movements of the fighters, while the cows trembled for their calves, and the young males stood aloof and envied the prowess. At last height and great spirit won the victory over age and experience; the elephant of the One Tusk went alone and wounded from his kingdom, never to be seen again, while the great black Tusker danced the dance of victory and lorded it over the young males, and chose his bride.

She was of a paler grey than the rest, who were almost black, and her paleness came of an old stock, and won her his regard. So the Pale One knew her lord.

Who can tell of the wanderings of the herd during the three years which followed? They rarely stayed long in one place. In the rainy time they sought the hills, and in the dry time they followed the river, where they would stand at evening in the deep, draining great gulps, squirting one another, teaching the

young to swim, revelling in the cool and depth of it. Great, black, shiny monsters they were, but by the side of the greatest of all was always one of paler hue, whom he served, towering over her with his immense height, full of tusk, broad of forehead, with great spreading ears. He ruled the twenty-five elephants of the herd sternly, nor brooked interference from other herds which crossed their path, so that they became famous, and had the freedom of all the jungles of the south, with the coolest places for the heat, the best drinking pools, and the sweetest bamboo groves. No elephant ever stood in the path of the big black Tusker, lord of the Pale One.

In the third summer of their wandering, directly after the rains, there came a spirit of unrest on the herd. They were leaving the hills for the country of green scrub and luscious fresh food, welcoming the sun, which they had not seen for many days. Yet one day, as they stood basking in the open, a feeling of restlessness came on them. To an elephant this means either that he is in love or that he is being interfered with; in the latter case it is the instinct of the curtailment of that freedom which is his birthright. The old mother of the herd felt it first, as it came on the breeze to her, and she communicated the news. They were not alone in the jungle; something was stirring between them and the hills—other elephants perhaps—or something unknown.

One or two of the younger males threw up their trunks and squealed, and were promptly dealt with by the Tusker, who wanted to listen, and said so; then shuffling and stamping

ceased; mothers quieted their calves; only the breeze from the hills sighed in the grass and tiny birds twittered; then from far away knowledge came to them.

The ground vibrated ever so slightly; other elephants were afoot ... a great herd ... two, three herds ... one from the direction of the sun, another from the hills, and another from the plain of great grass. But there was something else ... a new smell, vaguely disconcerting ... men.

Then an unusual thing happened: the big Tusker did not, as was his wont, turn to challenge the new herds, but began to move uneasily, aloof from the rest, throwing his trunk and shifting his feet; presently he moved slowly away, and the Pale One joined him; then, one by one, the rest followed. When they were together, the rush quickened to full pace, and they thrust through the thickets, massed like a wedge, driving a road over the country, never stopping till nightfall. It was a new experience—the first of many—and it meant panic. The herd had rarely travelled like that, at full pace, *en masse*, careless of its mothers and the calves ... and never for a whole day. But they got beyond the area of unrest, and were in free land again, where the ground brought no vibrations, and the breeze no upsetting smell. They did not forget these things, because only few things are forgotten by elephants, but they puzzled over them that night, and next day moved on towards the distant river jungles, not *en masse*, but in open feeding formation, eating as they went. For two days they travelled on over the low hillocks, each day making a longer midday halt; then, on the

third day, they came upon a little pool with good green feeding on its banks, where they stayed a night and a day, carelessly feeding and wallowing. But at dusk they saw a new thing.

The older ones had seen it before, and thought little of it at a distance if they were hungry. What they saw was a line of little points of light, flashing out behind them, like stars over the hill; the wind brought smoke too, which tickled the trunk curiously; and there were little sounds, such as they had heard in villages; then a faint sound which they knew well—the far-off call of a she-elephant—the night call. Familiar it was, and yet unfamiliar; it brought back the spirit of unrest to them, for it was not a free call—it had trouble in it, such as they did not understand.

At the second trumpeting, the herd left the sucking mud and plunged into the darkness, careless of what they trampled or where they went, driving in fear through the night. From that time they knew restless days and nights; the sense of freedom had passed.

Chapter 2

The twinkling lights were not those of a village, but of a great camp. There were a hundred camp fires on the side of a low hill, and round them many men squatted. The red glow lit up wild faces among the little tents and the trees; there was bustle of cooking and a good smell of hot food; pipes were being passed round from mouth to mouth, and in every group there

was one who talked of elephants, and many who nodded. Here were grizzled old mahouts, heroes of many kheddahs,¹ who spoke of great elephants as if they were children, and wore the Maharajah's medals; their sons, smooth-faced young men in bright turbans, who hung upon their words; the elephant servants—thin, bearded Mohammedans, with sleepy, drugged eyes; the trackers—wild, hairy jungle men, almost naked, talking in strange tongues; and, besides, a motley crew of beaters and chamars² and water-carriers and coolies from Mysore and Malabar, who raised a babel of chatter. The only restful things were the lines of dim elephants in the background, silent for the most part, save when one trumpeted or brushed a branch to and fro with his trunk to clear it of dust. The fire flickers just showed these swaying forms under the trees, dignified amid the bustle, eating unhurriedly their heaps of green branches.

Meals were eaten; from some of the groups came snatches of song—the crooning of Southern love, and the triumphs of roping elephants; a drum was beaten in the shadows; then the talk died and men lay down, muffled in brown blankets, while the watchers sat silent. At last there was no sound but the shuffling and munching of the great sentinels of the moving camp, the driving elephants of Mysore.

1. Kheddah = Enclosure.

2. Chamar = Tanner, leather-worker.

There was indeed good cause for the panic of the wild herd. That moving camp was full of purpose, and the khaki-clad man with the eyes of a hunter, who ruled it, knew his business. This was the central camp of three, moving in the form of crescent over the elephant country, tracking herds, and persuading them gently forward day by day in the direction of the Cauvery kheddahs. At present they were rounding up, but their most difficult duty lay ahead, and began with the exact timing of the last drive at close quarters when the three groups should converge on the same day. But it was all hard work, for they were moving in country untouched by man, far from villages and crops—the country of wild elephant and buffalo. Their strange encounters in thicket and by river while driving or fetching chara³ would fill many stories; but they were travelling all the time, tracking as they went, keeping touch with the other groups in a land of no communications, and rounding up stray elephants from the wild herds.

They had made touch with three herds in all, and the biggest was in the middle. Only one man had seen this herd, which had moved forward like a phantom at full pace, and he spoke of a giant, a rajah among elephants, and of a pale tuskless elephant, standing out of the welter of the rest; the mighty mallan,⁴ the torn-up trees, and the scarred tree-trunks on the

3. Chara = Feed of elephants.

4. Mallan = Track of an elephant.

elephant path showed that he spoke the truth, and that this was the master herd. By the time the three camps had converged in the neighbourhood of Karapur, where deep jungle flanks the Cauvery River, the Pale One and her lord had become famous, almost legendary ... the theme of many a mahout's prayer and triumph-song. The herd had the reputation of being restless; as it was feared that they might overshoot the kheddah jungle and cross the river, they had not been overharried or molested. On the night before the kheddah drive they were tearing the bamboo near the river's edge, uneasy, but settled for the time being. There was a great suspense in the camp of two thousand men and two hundred elephants, gathered for the final act of their long drama.

Chapter 3

Ever since the stampede from the pool the wild herd had travelled fast—too fast for the Pale One, who was shortly destined to present her lord with a son. More and more she had lagged behind, and only a great heart had helped her through. So when at last they reached the welcome shade of the river jungle she lay down and rested long, while the others were tearing at the trees and rejoicing at having thrown off the unrest.

But they rejoiced too soon, for on the third day, as they were moving for the evening drink, they heard the trumpeting of an elephant near at hand, again and again, whereat the big Tusker stopped to listen, flapping his ears and gently raising

his trunk. There were elephants close behind them ... but not only elephants—there were men, many men. Sounds of drums and gongs and stirring and shouting filtered the trees as the herd fidgeted uneasily and began to mass. There was a moment of uncertainty, and then they saw lights in the wood, waving and bobbing, and waited to see no more; they crashed forward, shambling through the dense growth till they came out on to the sand by the river, where the red rays of the setting sun lit up the water and intensified the gloom of the farther bank ... then they plunged into the stream, the great Tusker leading and the Pale One in the rear, and between them a surge of scrambling subjects, old and young, half-grown and calves, fighting to gain the gloom of the bank beyond.

Then suddenly that gloom burst into flame. Even the unconquerable drive of a wild herd was pulled up short. One moment all had been darkness and silence ahead of them; the next, men burst from the trees in hundreds with shouts and sudden noises like the rending of trees—and, above all, the lights. They could not face those torches. Dazed, bewildered, they turned up-stream, to find that elephants had put into the water from both banks and were advancing in line; the bank which they had left, too, was full of dancing, leaping men with lights. The herd hesitated; two young males broke away up-stream and flung themselves against the line: it was like dashing against a brick wall. They met four great old Tuskers, who pushed them squealing down-stream with ugly blows in the ribs, while sharp spears pricked them in tender places from

above, and loud cracks rang in their ears; smarting, buffeted, stunned, they blundered into the deep water with a gurgle and a splash, and half swam, half floundered past the herd, which was standing at bay. A black mass they made against the red sky—the humped forms gathered round the big Tusker, who with angry eyes, ears out, trunk extended, awaited the first shock.

Then, with a rush and a bump, the line met them; there was a mighty swaying and pushing—loud gun-shots, flashes, sharp thrusts, cries of men, smell of gunpowder—all in a mêlée; but the advancing line had the advantage of science, impetus, and the stream, and the wild herd had to give, breaking and scattering suddenly, the Pale One leading the rout. It was not her way to flee, but she knew that she must reserve her strength and trust her lord.

So the herd broke, but their spirit was not gone. Amid pandemonium from both banks there were a dozen individual fights as elephant after elephant broke back, leaving only the mothers with their calves to take their time and move on; but, one by one, they encountered new tactics, for they were cut off, roughly hustled, and mastered in detail, fight as they would. The big Tusker, who held the rear, found himself the special charge of four full-grown elephants; he could have tackled the lot in the open, unhampered, but here he was too angry for strategy; when he knocked one out of his way the other three butted into him from behind; and when he turned to vent his wrath he saw flashes and had stinging pains in the head. So

he could but lash and storm and ramp like a half-grown elephant, sending up the water in great sprays around him, as he was gradually edged down below the steep right bank in the wake of the rest.

So the herd was passing down the river, when suddenly the Pale One stood still. Below her, stretched across the stream, she saw another line—silent, impassive, motionless—of full forty elephants. She looked right and left; on the left the crowd still surged with their torches; on the right was the high bank—but here was a gap in the bank and a track into dark jungle above. Slowly and uncertainly she made for that gap, still suspicious, but, as nothing happened, she walked up the track, past a fence, into a bamboo grove. Then the herd, bundled together between two converging lines, massed again and followed their queen; last of all came the big Tusker, who stood proudly at bay in the middle of the gap. Then a whole constellation of flashes dazed his eyes, and he, the lord of the Southern jungles, turned and followed his herd. Something clashed behind him—timber on timber. They were in kheddah.

Chapter 4

It was as if they had passed through a nightmare, and had awakened in good feeding jungle and absolute quiet. True, there were fires round the circle of the bamboo patch, and a jumble of sound, but they were not molested. The younger elephants started at once to feed on the bamboo, but the great

Tusker remained aloof and sulky, touring round the patch and trying the defences. He found that they were surrounded by a ditch that could not be crossed and a timber fence that could not be reached, and his defiant trumpeting woke the echoes and told the herd that all was not well.

But the Pale One was beyond caring, for her time was very near. That night she went apart from the rest, and in the morning there lay beside her a little crumpled grey object no bigger than a sheep-dog. In the dim morning she stood over it, and caressed it with her trunk, till soon it tottered to its feet, and felt for her; so she fed it, forgetting the nightmare for a while.

For a day and a night they had peace, and she grew to love her little one at her side, playing with it, feeling all over it with her trunk, giving her milk freely for its strength, watching it find its feet.

Then, on the morning of the second day, the nightmare returned. The great Tusker, in his pilgrimage round the ditch, suddenly came face to face with a line of elephants drawn up outside for battle; he parted the bamboos, and for a long time remained gazing, measuring, taking stock ... then slowly turned and rejoined the herd. Then they heard the opening of the gates and the entry of the enemy ... so the great fight began.

They had good hope this time; they had rested and were in the open—their own ground; and they were prepared. The Pale One went at once to a lonely corner, her little one ambling along at her side, while her lord led the charge in mass formation

at the centre of the line. But, as they closed, the noises started again, and the pricks in tender parts, and all the bewilderments of the first fight. Once more they encountered science that was not of the wild, for they were deftly cut up and hustled in batches in the direction of a tall enclosure with a narrow entrance. Soon it became evident that the strangers meant to drive them into that enclosure, and they resisted with might and main, breaking back again and again, scattering the enemy, they rallying to their leader ... but always the enemy re-formed and encircled them. At noon honours were still equal, for the enemy retired outside, while the herd made for a muddy little swamp with shallow water in it, and for an hour drank deep for refreshment, and blew out spouts of muddy water to cool one another. Only the Pale One did not join them, tending her babe apart, ill at ease.

When the fight began again, the enemy had reinforced; the herd was completely surrounded in the swamp, and hustled pell-mell towards the enclosure, where a last stand was made against overwhelming numbers; nothing availed: willy-nilly they were bundled through the gap into the small enclosure, where they heaved and barged and squeezed, trumpeting and squealing, making the timbers creak.

Only the great Tusker managed to break away, irresistibly, as a ship drives through water, sending three elephants headlong before him. He stood near the gate, gathering his strength for an ugly rush, ready to take on the whole line in fair fight... But the fight was not fair; as he was advancing, there came the

last indignity, and the first knowledge of slavery ... the rope touched him. Deftly his head was lassoed; then a hind leg; then another; then came a mad struggle against six elephants tugging at the end of the ropes; he became aware of men too, and struggled the more. The old freedom had gone; he could not fight devilry—creepers that twined and would not break. Dimly understanding that his hour had come, and that his birthright had been stolen from him, he suffered himself to be drawn away by the six down a steep bank into the cooling river ... out of sight of his herd.

So passed the great Tuskar into the haunts of men for the years of slavery.

It was the Pale One who made the Homeric fight, which will be told over camp fires a generation hence. They found her in a corner, tending her babe, and she confronted them, pushing the babe beneath her body. Then they hemmed her in, but the trained elephants shrank from her and would not close, for all that she was the smaller and alone. Men said afterwards that she was bewitched, for she made the boldest half-hearted, and drove through them, butting with her broad forehead, striking with her heavy trunk. For an hour she led the hunt, and they could not catch her nor close with her; even when defeat seemed certain she broke the line with the force of a ram, and the boldest turned from her. She was fighting for more than life, or the honour of the herd, or the freedom of the South: she was battling for her young, and dimly she knew what the loss of the fight would mean—the loss of the love she felt for him.

She never would have been taken alive had she not looked down and missed her babe ... saw it being led away ... gave a mad squeal, and chased, with destruction in her eyes ... then thundered against the great gates of the palisade.

So at last they caught her easily enough. The Pale One had nothing more to fight for.

In the evening she stood alone under a tall tree, the chain clanking at her leg. While the others trumpeted and fought their chains, she was silent, with an ineffable sadness. Pale and ghostly she loomed against the glow of the camp fires, and men watched and wondered at her. Then they brought her the little grey elephant-babe, which ran up to her and commanded milk with its tiny trunk. ...

The Pale One turned her head slowly away. The free days were past, and she would never know her babe again.

From *The Naked Fakir and Other Stories* (1922)

A Philosopher Stag

by John Eyton

Chapter I

India is happy in her children, the deer, for they are many. Perhaps Ram Singh, whose little fields lie alongside the jungle, and who spends his nights watching for these same children, would not endorse the sentiment; but, after all, Ram Singh is in the minority, and even he should not be utterly thankless, for he has the venison.

They all have their characteristics: nobility for the Hangul of Kashmir, greater brother of the Red Deer; charm for the Cheetal, with his spotted hide and his tapering horns; cheek for the little autumn-coated Khaker, who barks like a dog; pride for the Gond of the swamps and long grass, with antlers

branching like an oak. But the familiar Sambar of wood and hill has a rugged honesty all his own; he is the quiet friend of the woods, big and dark and beautiful.

'Rusa Aristotelis' they call him in Natural History, surely because he, too, is something of a philosopher; shy, but trustful; slow to stir, and apt to blunder when he gets up, like the philosopher at the tea-table; a trifle absent-minded; contented, with simple tastes. What more would you have?

Hear, then, the story of a philosopher stag. He was born in the forests of Nepal, near the banks of the Sarda river, of a strong, hardy breed. In childhood he was familiar with the utterly wild forests, where man was unknown and elephants brought no fear; when he only owned as enemies the tiger, the leopard, and the destroying red dog, which foes his mother, soft-eyed and watchful for him, taught him to shun. He grew quickly, and early found his strength and speed, while he carried the long brow-points of the fighter; though he fought seldom, among his own kind he was destined for high place. What pride he took in those horns, as year by year he made a higher score on the tree-trunks, and felt his crown more pleasantly heavy. Strong horns they were, thick at the base, gnarled like the Sal trees among which he fed—veritable trunks themselves, and of the dark colour of trunks, cleft near the top in two strong branches, sharp and light-coloured at the tips; and between the horns was a noble span, fully a yard inside the bend. Such did he grow to be in his prime, free of the woodland and the hill-sides, and of the shady drinking-places by the rivers, while yearly he mated his large-eyed does.

He was big in body, of a slaty colour, and with long wiry hair on throat and neck, like a mane upside down; he had soft, big ears, light-hued inside, and deep eye-pits for eyes like dark woodland pools.

His daily course seldom changed. The daytime he spent in the foot-hills, and slept for most of the time in a warm baithak¹ among the leaves and grass under the tall trees of a rounded hill-top; then, when the sun was setting, he would wander down to the river and the level places for food and drink, with a wary eye open for his enemies. All night he would move feeding—on nuts, berries, leaves, grass, according to season—then at dawn he would steal through the mists to his high perch again. In their season he had his little family of does to do him honour; in youth, too, he had wandered with other stags of his age; but dignity brought solitude, and he spent his latter years alone.

He might have stayed in deep Nepal all his days had he not been disturbed in old age by a tiger beat, involving a hundred elephants, and gongs, and strange noises, and been driven incontinently from his ancient and rightful home. He resented this intrusion deeply, for he could hardly know that anxiety to make sure of the tiger had saved him a bullet in the shoulder at twenty yards.

So he snorted loudly, with the sharp note of a horn, rushed through the woods till he came to the river, and splashed

1. Baithak = Form, resting-place.

through deep water to the other side. Then, philosopher that he was, he stopped to look back.

Noises everywhere! No place for him.

He walked slowly into the Sal wood, and began to wander westwards.

Chapter 2

The spirit of unrest was in him, and he travelled a long way, more than a day's journey from Nepal. He found the jungle thinner and less apt to impede the horns; it was homely, sunny stuff, with fair feeding and enough water, and he was tired, so he delayed his return.

On the second evening he made a delightful discovery. He had walked a little south, and had left the tall trees for a country of golden grass and brown bushes, where cheetal were feeding, and some smaller stags of his own kind. Absent-mindedly he followed the latter in the dusk till they came on an open space, stretching as far as the eye could see—fresh and green. The others started browsing, and he took a nibble or two ... a new taste, utterly delightful, and soft to yellowing old teeth; and apparently an inexhaustible supply. He spent the night in this pleasant place, and lay up near it in the grass for the day. Truly the new country contained things undreamed of.

The next night he returned with the eagerness of a gourmet to his new pastures, and wandered a little farther afield without

taking much note of a queer structure which stood up like an overburdened tree some distance from the jungle.

Suddenly a deafening roar made him jump a yard in the air; there was a blinding flash as if the sun had fallen in the night; and his coat was stung in several places. With his usual alarm signal, he made like a meteor for the woods, and did not stop till he had covered half a mile.

Meanwhile, old Ram Singh gathered up his box of slugs, his powder flask, and his muzzle-loader, and climbed wearily down from his perch. A pest on the jungle that an old man should lose his sleep of nights; twenty rupees worth of young wheat ruined, and no venison!

But he rather enjoyed telling his wife about the monster he had shot at. The sound and the scramble had come from no mamuli janwar.² He was almost inclined to make it an elephant and be done with it.

Scared as he had been, the great stag could not forget the lure of the green food. If instinct bade him return east, appetite drew him west, and west he went. Again he travelled farther than he had intended, for he got into a patch of jungle where men were sawing wood, with a noise remarkably like a leopard's song, and had to gallop on, much disturbed by the new portent.

But always he found the same green food at the jungle's edge, and, like Lotus, it made him forget.

2. Mamuli janwar = Ordinary animal.

Perhaps the richness of his new diet made him a trifle fat and slack. At any rate he was nearly destroyed one day in a way most terrible of all for a child of the wild ... by fire.

There were evil-minded men in this new country, and their way of avenging a fancied wrong was to set alight thousands of acres of jungle, thus destroying all green things, and birds, with many of the beasts and most of their young. The ordinary yearly fires, lit in definite places for the benefit of the grass, were known to the deer, who had an easy line of escape from the wave of flame. But this was different—a devilish scheme.

One quiet evening, at drinking time, six men stole into the jungle at points far apart—men with dark hair and dark faces, low-caste and furtive. As the evening breeze began to sigh through the trees, these men knelt down at their various points, and soon before each of them there was a little curl of smoke in the grass; then a tongue of flame lit their faces for an instant before they fled.

Within five minutes the jungle was alight at six points, and peace was no more. Every animal looked up and sniffed the breeze; then started for the hills. But suddenly they hesitated—there was more smoke ahead. Now they stamped and fidgeted, ill at ease, while the birds flew twittering from tree to tree above them; finally they stampeded wildly as the roar of the fire came to them. Many perished; many lost their young, and their own lives in looking for them; only the lucky lived in that mad, aimless, cruel stampede. There were startled eyes and wild cries, and crashings through the trees, while the lighters of the

fires crouched round the little fires that are for honest men, and laughed.

The old stag was sitting in the grass when he caught the smell, and had hardly struggled to his feet when a wave of flame behind him smote and crumpled the trees. He dashed forward at a gallop, saw another line of flame to his right, swerved, and crashed headlong into a hidden nullah with water in it. He had lost his head completely, for all his philosophy, and would certainly have been burned to death or suffocated if the banks of the nullah had not been deep and absolutely sheer. He was forced to splash, at the gallop, through the water in its bed to escape what he looked on ungratefully as a prison, until he emerged on to a rocky beach, free of undergrowth, leading to freedom.

He did not stop to breathe the cool, clean air, but galloped on and on into the west, mile after mile, until his breath gave, and he was forced to sink panting to the ground. For days he pursued his course at the foot of the hills, crossing rivers and gullies and roads, passing little villages, with fresh terrors of fire in them, and green fields where he dared not stop to eat.

He was only pulled up in his long flight because the jungle seemed suddenly to end, and he had to retrace his steps a little. Then at last he rested.

Chapter 3

He had come to a strip of jungle, stretching like a finger from the hills, and lining both banks of a clear, bubbling stream. On

either side mustard fields marched with the forest, yellow below the blue backs of the hills. The place had a new atmosphere—free from alarm. There would be good feeding in the woods from favourite trees, and a carpet of soft moss beneath them. Here was the ideal resting-place, the Eutopia of age ... a place wherein he could end his days in peace, feeding on the threshold of home, drinking his own waters undisturbed. Here the evening breeze called him to stay and rest the burden of his horns, till one day he would no more be able to rise and wind his alarm, but would wait patiently for the tiger to spring and deal the death-blow, swift and merciful.

The home he chose was a little ruined garden, set in the midst of the forest on the bank of the stream. Long ago a man had tilled it, and still the bright oranges swung in the green leaves, and the little red plums gave feasting to the birds. Green parrots rioted above, while the peacock and the jungle fowl shared the ground below; and there was naught to break the peace or mar the beauty. Here the old stag lay down, and many days he brooded in the nest he had formed, his great horns merged with the low branches of the tree that gave him shade, while his soft ears flapped gently to and fro. In the evening he would struggle slowly to his feet and walk though the trees to the stream-bank, and, when the sun set in gold, his great form would stand out magnificently as he raised his head towards the hills.

First he would sip lightly—look up again—drink deep to the fill; then once more raise his proud head, and so stand till the dark came over him.

So he lived his last days, till one evening the river called and he could not rise; his legs were as water and his head heavy. Twice he essayed to get up, and then, as if he knew that his time had come, lifted his soft eyes to the low sun, gazed a moment, and settled for the long rest.

Then the dark came on.

The Tiger-Charm

by Alice Perrin

The sun, the sky, the burning dusty atmosphere, and the waving sea of tall yellow grass seemed molten into one blinding blaze of pitiless heat to the aching vision of little Mrs. Wingate. In spite of blue goggles, pith sun-hat and enormous umbrella, she felt as though she were being slowly roasted alive, for the month was May, and she and her husband were perched on the back of an elephant, traversing a large tract of jungle at the foot of the Himalayas.

Colonel Wingate was one of the keenest sportsmen in India, and every day for the past week had he and his wife, and their friend, Captain Bastable, sallied forth from the camp with a line of elephants to beat through the forests of grass that

reached to the animal's ears; to squelch over swamps, disturbing herds of antelope and wild pig; to pierce thick tangles of jungle, from which rose pea-fowl, black partridge, and birds of gorgeous plumage; to cross stony beds of dry rivers—ever on the watch for the tigers that had hitherto baffled all their efforts.

As each 'likely' spot was drawn a blank, Netta Wingate heaved a sigh of relief, for she hated sport, was afraid of the elephants, and lived in hourly terror of seeing a tiger. She longed for the fortnight in camp to be over, and secretly hoped that the latter week of it might prove as unsuccessful as the first. Her skin was burnt to the hue of a berry, her head ached perpetually from the heat and glare, the motion of the elephant made her feel sick, and if she ventured to speak, her husband only impatiently bade her be quiet.

This afternoon, as they ploughed and rocked over the hard, uneven ground, she could scarcely keep awake, dazzled as she was by the vista of scorched yellow country and the gleam of her husband's rifle barrels in the melting sunshine. She swayed drowsily from side to side in the howdah, her head drooped, her eyelids closed. ...

She was roused by a torrent of angry exclamations. Her umbrella had hitched itself obstinately into the collar of Colonel Wingate's coat, and he was making infuriated efforts to free himself. Jim Bastable, approaching on his elephant, caught a mixed vision of the refractory umbrella and two agitated sun-hats, the red face and fierce blue eyes of the Colonel, and the

anxious, apologetic, sleepy countenance of Mrs. Wingate, as she hurriedly strove to release her irate lord and master. The whole party came to an involuntary halt, the natives listening with interest as the sahib stormed at the mem-sahib and the umbrella in the same breath.

'That howdah is not big enough for two people,' shouted Captain Bastable, coming to the rescue. 'Let Mrs. Wingate change to mine. It's bigger, and my elephant has easier paces.'

Hot, irritated, angry, Colonel Wingate commanded his wife to betake herself to Bastable's elephant, and to keep her infernal umbrella closed for the rest of the day, adding that women had no business out tiger-shooting; and why the devil had she come at all?—oblivious of the fact that Mrs. Wingate had begged to be allowed to stay in the station, and that he himself had insisted on her coming.

She well knew that argument or contradiction would only make matters worse, for he had swallowed three stiff whiskies and sodas at luncheon in the broiling sun, and since the severe sunstroke that had so nearly killed him two years ago, the smallest quantity of spirits was enough to change him from an exceedingly bad-tempered man into something little short of a maniac. She had heedlessly married him when she was barely nineteen, turning a deaf ear to warnings of his violence, and now, at twenty-three, her existence was one long fear. He never allowed her out of his sight, he never believed a word she said; he watched her, suspected her, bullied her unmercifully, and was insanely jealous. Unfortunately, she was one of those nervous,

timid women, who often rather provoke ill-treatment than otherwise.

This afternoon she marvelled at being permitted to change to Captain Bastable's howdah, and with a feeling of relief scrambled off the elephant, though trembling, as she always did, lest the great beast should seize her with his trunk or lash her with his tail, that was like a jointed iron rod. Then, once safely perched up behind Captain Bastable, she settled herself with a delightful sense of security. He understood her nervousness, he did not laugh or grumble at her little involuntary cries of fear; he was not impatient when she was convinced the elephant was running away or sinking in a quicksand, or that the howdah was slipping off. He also understood the Colonel, and had several times helped her through a trying situation; and now the sympathy in his kind eyes made her tender heart throb with gratitude.

'All right?' he asked.

She nodded, smiling, and they started again ploughing and lurching through the coarse grass, great wisps of which the elephant uprooted with his trunk, and beat against his chest to get rid of the soil before putting them in his mouth. Half an hour later, as they drew near the edge of the forest, one of the elephants suddenly stopped short, with a jerky, backward movement, and trumpeted shrilly. There was an expectant halt all along the line, and a cry from a native of 'Tiger! Tiger!' Then an enormous striped beast bounded out of the grass and stood for a moment in a small, open space, lashing its tail and

snarling defiance. Colonel Wingate fired. The tiger, badly wounded, charged, and sprang at the head of Captain Bastable's elephant. There was a confusion of noise; savage roars from the tiger; shrieks from the excited elephants, shouts from the natives; banging of rifles. Mrs. Wingate covered her face with her hands. She heard a thud, as of a heavy body falling to the ground, and then she found herself being flung from side to side of the howdah, as the elephant bolted madly towards the forest, one huge ear torn to ribbons by the tiger's claws.

She heard Captain Bastable telling her to hold on tight, and shouting desperate warnings to the mahout to keep the elephant as clear of the forest as possible. Like many nervous people in the face of real danger, she suddenly became absolutely calm, and uttered no sound as the pace increased and they tore along the forest edge, escaping overhanging boughs by a miracle. To her it seemed that the ponderous flight lasted for hours. She was bruised, shaken, giddy, and the crash that came at last was a relief rather than otherwise. A huge branch combed the howdah off the elephant's back, sweeping the mahout with it, while the still terrified animal sped on trumpeting and crashing through the forest.

Mrs. Wingate was thrown clear of the howdah. Captain Bastable had saved himself by jumping, and only the old mahout lay doubled up and unconscious amongst the debris of shattered wood, torn leather and broken ropes. Netta could hardly believe she was not hurt, and she and Captain Bastable stared at one another with dazed faces for some moments before they could

collect their senses. Far away in the distance they could hear the elephant still running. Between them they extricated the mahout, and, seating herself on the ground, Netta took the old man's unconscious head on to her lap, while Captain Bastable anxiously examined the wizened, shrunken body.

'Is he dead?' she asked.

'I can't be sure. I'm afraid he is. I wonder if I could find some water. I haven't an idea where we are, for I lost all count of time and distance. I hope Wingate is following us. Should you be afraid to stay here while I have a look round and see if we are anywhere near a village?'

'Oh, no, I sha'n't be frightened,' she said steadily. Her delicate, clear-cut face looked up at him fearlessly from the tangled background of mighty trees and dense creepers; and her companion could scarcely believe she was the same trembling, nervous little coward of an hour ago.

He left her, and the stillness of the jungle was very oppressive when the sound of his footsteps died away. She was alone with a dead, or dying, man, on the threshold of the vast, mysterious forest, with its possible horrors of wild elephants, tigers, leopards, snakes! She tried to turn her thoughts from such things, but the scream of a peacock made her start as it rent the silence, and then the undergrowth began to rustle ominously. It was only a porcupine that came out, rattling his quills, and, on seeing her, ran into further shelter out of sight. It seemed to be growing darker, and she fancied the evening must be drawing in. She wondered if her husband would overtake

them. If not, how were she and Jim Bastable to get back to the camp? Then she heard voices and footsteps, and presently a little party of natives came in sight, led by Jim and bearing a string bedstead.

'I found a village not far off,' he explained, 'and thought we'd better take the poor old chap there. Then, if the Colonel doesn't turn up by the time we've seen him comfortably settled, we must find our way back to the camp as best we can.'

The natives chattered and exclaimed as they lifted the unconscious body on to the bedstead, and then the little procession started. Netta was so bruised and stiff she could hardly walk; but, with the help of Bastable's arm, she hobbled along till the village was gained. The headman conducted them to his house, which consisted of a mud hovel shared by himself and his family with several relations, besides a cow and a goat with two kids. He gave Netta a wicker stool to sit on and some smoky buffalo's milk to drink, while the village physician was summoned, who at last succeeded in restoring the mahout to consciousness and pouring a potion down his throat.

'I die,' whispered the patient, feebly.

Netta went to his side, and he recognised her.

'A—ree! mem-sahib!' he quavered. 'So Allah has guarded thee. But the anger of the Colonel sahib will be great against me for permitting the elephant to run away, and it is better that I die. Where is that daughter of a pig? She was a rascal from her youth up; but to-day was the first time she ever really disobeyed my voice.'

He tried to raise himself, but fell back groaning, for his injuries were internal and past hope.

'It is growing dark.' He put forth his trembling hand blindly. 'Where is the little white lady who so feared the sahib, and the elephants, and the jungle? Do not be afraid, mem-sahib. Those who fear should never go into the jungle. So if thou seest a tiger, be bold, be bold; call him "uncle" and show him the tiger-charm. Then will he turn away and harm thee not——' He wandered on incoherently, his fingers fumbling with something at his throat, and presently he drew out a small silver amulet attached to a piece of cord. As he held it towards Netta, it flashed in the light of the miserable native oil lamp that someone had just brought in and placed on the floor.

'Take it, mem-sahib, and feel no fear while thou hast it, for no tiger would touch thee. It was my father's, and his father's before him, and there is that written on it which has ever protected us from the tiger's tooth. I myself shall need it no longer, for I am going, whereat my nephew will rejoice; for he has long coveted my seat. Thou shalt have the charm, mem-sahib, for thou hast stayed by an old man, and not left him to die alone in a Hindu village and a strange place. Some day, in the hour of danger, thy little fingers may touch the charm, and then thou wilt recall old Mahomed Bux, mahout, with gratitude.'

He groped for Netta's hand, and pushed the amulet into her palm. She took it, and laid her cool fingers on the old man's burning forehead.

'Salaam, Mahomed Bux,' she said softly. 'Bahut, bahut, bahut.' Which is the nearest Hindustani equivalent for 'Thank you.'

But he did not hear her. He was wandering again, and for half an hour he babbled of elephants, of tigers, of camps and jungles, until his voice became faint and died away in hoarse gasps.

Then he sighed heavily and lay still, and Jim Bastable took Mrs. Wingate out into the air, and told her that the old mahout was dead. She gave way and sobbed, for she was aching all over and tired to death, and she dreaded the return to the camp.

'Oh, my dear girl, please don't cry!' said Jim distressfully. 'Though really I can't wonder at it, after all you've gone through to-day; and you've been so awfully plucky, too.'

Netta gulped down her tears. It was delicious to be praised for courage, when she was only accustomed to abuse for cowardice.

'How are we to get back to the camp?' she asked dolefully. 'It's so late.'

And, indeed, darkness had come swiftly on, and the light of the village fires was all that enabled them to see each other.

'The moon will be up presently; we must wait for that. They say the village near our camp lies about six miles off, and that there is a cart-track of sorts towards it. I told them they must let us have a bullock-cart, and we shall have to make the best of that.'

They sat down side by side on a couple of large stones, and listened in silence to the lowing of the tethered cattle, the ceaseless, irritating cry of the brain fever bird, and the subdued conversation of a group of children and village idlers, who had assembled at a respectful distance to watch them with inquisitive

interest. Once a shrill trumpeting in the distance told of a herd of wild elephants out for a night's raid on the crops, and at intervals packs of jackals swept howling across the fields, while the moon rose gradually over the collection of squalid huts and flooded the vast country with a light that made the forest black and fearful.

Then a clumsy little cart, drawn by two small, frightened white bullocks, rattled into view. Jim and Netta climbed into the vehicle, and were politely escorted off the premises by the headman and the concourse of interested villagers and excited women and children.

They bumped and shook over the rough, uneven track: The bullocks raced or crawled alternately, while the driver twisted their tails and abused them, hoarsely. The moonlight grew brighter and more glorious. The air, now soft and cool, was filled with strong scents and the hum of insects released from the heat of the day.

At last they caught the gleam of white tents against the dark background of a mango-grove.

'The camp,' said Captain Bastable, shortly.

Netta made a nervous exclamation.

'Do you think there will be a row?' he asked with some hesitation. They had never discussed Mrs. Wingate's domestic troubles together.

'Perhaps he is still looking out for us,' she said evasively.

'If he had followed us at all, he must have found us. I believe he went on shooting, or back to the camp.' There was an angry

impatience in his voice: 'Don't be nervous,' he added hastily. 'Try not to mind anything he may say. Don't listen. He can't always help it, you know. I wish you could persuade him to retire; the sun out here makes him half off his head.'

'I wish I could,' she sighed. 'But he will never do anything I ask him, and the big game shooting keeps him in India.'

Jim nodded, and there was a comprehending silence between them till they reached the edge of the camp, got out of the cart, and made their way to the principal tent. There they discovered Colonel Wingate, still in his shooting clothes, sitting by the table, on which stood an almost empty bottle of whisky. He rose as they entered, and delivered himself of a torrent of bad language. He accused the pair of going off together on purpose, declaring he would divorce his wife and kill Bastable. He stormed, raved and threatened, giving them no opportunity of speaking, until at last Jim broke in and insisted on being heard.

'For Heaven's sake, be quiet,' he said firmly, 'or you'll have a fit. You saw the elephant run away, and apparently you made no effort to follow us and come to our help. We were swept off by a tree, and the mahout was mortally hurt. It was a perfect miracle that neither your wife nor I was killed. The mahout died in a village, and we had to get here in a bullock-cart.' Then, seeing Wingate preparing for another onslaught, Bastable took him by the shoulders. 'My dear chap, you're not yourself. Go to bed, and we'll talk it over to-morrow if you still wish to.'

Colonel Wingate laughed harshly. His mood had changed suddenly.

'Go to bed?' he shouted boisterously. 'Why, I was just going out when you arrived. There was a kill last night, only a mile off, and I'm going to get the tiger.' He stared wildly at Jim, who saw that he was not responsible for his words and actions. The brain, already touched by sunstroke, had given way at last under the power of whisky. Jim's first impulse was to prevent his carrying out his intention of going after the tiger. Then he reflected that it was not safe for Netta to be alone with the man, and that, if Wingate were allowed his own way, it would at least take him out of the camp.

'Very well,' said Jim quietly, 'and I will come with you.'

'Do,' answered the Colonel pleasantly, and then, as Bastable turned for a moment, Mrs. Wingate saw her husband make a diabolical grimace at the other's unconscious back. Her heart beat rapidly with fear. Did he mean to murder Jim? She felt convinced he contemplated mischief; but the question was how to warn Captain Bastable without her husband's knowledge. The opportunity came more easily than she had expected, for presently the Colonel went outside to call for his rifle and give some orders. She flew to Bastable's side.

'Be careful,' she panted; 'he wants to kill you, I know he does. He's mad! Oh, don't go with him—don't go——'

'It will be all right,' he said reassuringly. 'I'll look out for myself, but I can't let him go alone in this state. We shall only sit up in a tree for an hour or two, for the tiger must have come and gone long ago. Don't be frightened. Go to bed and rest.'

She drew from her pocket the little polished amulet the mahout had given her.

'At any rate, take this,' she said hysterically. 'It may save you from a tiger, if it doesn't from my husband. I know I am silly, but do take it. There may be luck in it, you can never tell; and old Mahomed Bux said it had saved him and his father and his grandfather—and that you ought to call a tiger "uncle"—' she broke off, half laughing, half crying, utterly unstrung.

To please her he put the little charm into his pocket, and after a hasty drink went out and joined Wingate, who insisted that they should proceed on foot and by themselves. Bastable knew it would be useless to make any opposition, and they started, their rifles in their hands; but, when they had gone some distance and the tainted air told them they were nearing their destination, Jim discovered he had no cartridges.

'Never mind,' whispered the Colonel, 'I have plenty, and our rifles have the same bore. We can't go back now; we've no time to lose.'

Jim submitted, and he and Wingate tiptoed to the foot of a tree, the low branches and thick leaves of which afforded an excellent hiding-place, down-wind from the half-eaten carcass of the cow. They climbed carefully up, making scarcely any noise, and then Jim held out his hand to the other for some cartridges. The Colonel nodded.

'Presently,' he whispered, and Jim waited, thinking it extremely unlikely that cartridges would be wanted at all.

The moonlight came feebly through the foliage of the surrounding trees on to the little glade before them, in which

lay the remains of the carcass pulled under a bush to shield it from the carrion birds. A deer pattered by towards the river, casting startled glances on every side; insects beat against the faces of the two men; and a jackal ran out with his brush hanging down, looked round, and retired again, with a melancholy howl. Then there arose a commotion in the branches of the neighbouring trees, and a troupe of monkeys fought and crashed and chattered, as they leapt from bough to bough. Jim knew that this often portended the approach of a tiger, and the moment afterwards a long, hoarse call from the river told him that the warning was correct. He made a silent sign for the cartridges; but Wingate took no notice: his face was hard and set, and the whites of his eyes gleamed.

A few seconds later a large tiger crept slowly out of the grass, his stomach on the ground, his huge head held low. Jim remembered the native superstition that the head of a man-eating tiger is weighed down by the souls of its victims. With a run and a spring the creature attacked its meal, and began growling and munching contentedly, purring like a cat, and stopping every now and then to tear up the earth with its claws.

A report rang out. Wingate had fired at and hit the tiger. The great beast gave a terrific roar and sprang at the tree. Jim lifted his rifle, only to remember that it was unloaded.

'Shoot again!' he cried excitedly, as the tiger fell back and prepared for another spring. To his horror Wingate deliberately fired the second barrel into the air, and, throwing away the rifle, grasped him by the arms. The man's teeth were bared,

his face distorted and hideous, his purpose unmistakable—he was trying to throw Bastable to the tiger. Wingate was strong with the diabolical strength of madness, and they swayed till the branches of the tree crackled ominously. Again the tiger roared and sprang, and again fell back, only to gather itself together for another effort. The two men rocked and panted, the branches cracked louder with a dry, splitting sound, then broke off altogether, and, locked in each other's arms, they fell heavily to the ground.

Jim Bastable went undermost, and was half stunned by the shock. He heard a snarl in his ear, followed by a dreadful cry. He felt the weight of Wingate's body lifted from him with a jerk, and he scrambled blindly to his feet. As in a nightmare, he saw the tiger bounding away, carrying something that hung limply from the great jaws, just as a cat carries a dead mouse.

He seized the Colonel's rifle that lay near him; but he knew it was empty, and that the cartridges were in the Colonel's pocket. He ran after the tiger, shouting, yelling, brandishing the rifle, in hopes of frightening the brute into dropping its prey; but, after one swift glance back, it bounded into the thick jungle with the speed of a deer, and Bastable was left standing alone.

Faint and sick, he began running madly towards the camp for help, though he knew well that nothing in this world could ever help Wingate again. His forehead was bleeding profusely, either hurt in the fall or touched by the tiger's claw, and the blood trickling into his eyes nearly blinded him. He pulled his

handkerchief from his pocket as he ran, and something came with it that glittered in the moonlight and fell to the ground with a metallic ring.

It was the little silver amulet. The tiger-charm.

From *East of Suez* (1926)

Travels with a Bear Cub

by C.H. Donald

Bhaloo had no sense of decency, no conscience worth talking about, no sense of propriety, and, in fact, there was very little about him which, in polite society, we consider essential. One thing he had in a very high stage of development, and that carried him through life. It was a wonderful sense of humour. Had he been left to roam the forests he would have been a Dan Leno-Harry Lauder combination among his own people—the regular inhabitants of the woods—but Bhaloo came into my keeping early in life and the woods were deprived of much boisterous pleasure in consequence.

From C.H. Donald, *Companions—Feathered, Furred and Scaled* (Bombay, 1917).

How I first met Bhaloo does not much matter, but the mother of any bear is a nasty thing to meet at close quarters. I met his mother at very close quarters. Either she or I had to die. I preferred that she should. She did. The poor orphan thus came into my possession and showed his gratitude by nearly biting my thumb off and scratching my face. That first hour in my care Bhaloo did not like at all. He was tied up fore and aft and there was more rope than Bhaloo to be seen when we arrived back in camp, but he made himself heard all right.

I presented him with quite a pretty dog-collar studded with brass, and a nice little chain, and he was tied to a stake just outside the verandah.

During the first hour he did nothing but bite his chain, turn somersaults, get his legs entangled in his collar and then swear at the top of his voice. I was going to say little voice, but though Bhaloo was little his voice was not. Even a bear gets tired after a bit and this little chap was no exception. He finally collapsed and slept the sleep of the unjust. It was late in the evening when he awoke and I offered him a saucer of milk with a spoonful of sugar mixed in it. Bhaloo gave it a slap and sent it flying down the hill and then tried to bite me; ungrateful pig that he was I then threw him a ripe apricot. He smelt it, made a long nose and then turned his back on it and carried on like a very spoilt child, yelling the hillside down. It took him a long time to discover that the chain was not a pleasant thing to bite too frequently, but he finally did find this out and then he turned his attention to the ground and began digging it up.

I tried him once again with milk but in vain so gave it up for the night. Bhaloo had very lusty lungs and made the night hideous with his yells, and every soul in the compound wished him elsewhere. Next morning he was much more sober and I found that the much squashed and trampled apricot had disappeared and only the seed remained. Another saucer of milk was offered and again refused—and not even decently refused—but anyway it was not sent flying down the hill this time, and that was hopeful.

I sat down beside him, just out of reach of his claws and teeth, and remained there for well over half an hour, by which time Bhaloo gave up swearing and even walked past me without opening his mouth and wobbling his nose at me. I tried the milk again and he put a very dirty paw into the middle of it, then put the paw on the ground and finally sucked it. He liked the taste of milk and dust very much. I again held out the saucer, very slowly towards him.

He looked at it, very nearly said 'thanks', in bear language, then changed his mind, fixed two beady eyes on me, wobbled his nose and gave the saucer two frightful slaps. What lay on the ground did not resemble milk in the least. Bhaloo very deliberately put the end of one sharp claw into the mess and as deliberately brought his claw to his nose and smelt it. The smell was doubtful but evidently good, so he had another try and this time conveyed his dirty claw to his mouth and licked it. He thought he could now trust his tongue on the stain on the ground. Bhaloo had not learnt that 'he who hesitates is

lost', for, by now, the liquid had been absorbed by the earth, and all that remained was a dark stain. He licked it and got some mud into his mouth, so just what might have been expected of him, happened.

He promptly blamed me for spilling the milk, wobbled his nose at me twice, scratched up the ground and came straight for me, using the vilest language I had yet heard. To assuage his wrath I sent for more milk and this time only put a little into the saucer and politely offered it to him again. Again he put a dirty paw into it, and once more he sucked his paw and then actually put his tongue into the saucer, and, for the first time, discovered that milk and sugar was a pleasanter mixture than mud, milk, and sugar. With both paws in the saucer he lapped up every scrap and swore at me loudly because I could not see the saucer to pour in more, on account of his paws. From now on it was plain sailing and Bhaloo and I got better friends daily. Within three days we went out for our first walk with all the dogs. They tolerated him but did not trust him, nor did I.

Bhaloo grew in stature and also in wisdom, but it was the wisdom of his Satanic Majesty. He was now about 6 months old and had been my regular companion for some 3 months, and had even become a *shikari*, loving the sound of a gun. Bhaloo could not be trusted inside the house, so had to be chained up during the day. After tea he was let loose and would join the dogs and accompany his master on his afternoon stroll.

He was a clown naturally and when he was quiet, which was very seldom, you knew he was hatching some plot. Butter would

not melt in Bhaloo's mouth so long as your eyes were glued on him. If by chance you looked up the hill, you were brought back to thoughts of Bhaloo very rudely by finding a solid ursine form embracing you round the leg and doing his best to land you on your nose. It was done and over in a second, for the moment he had given you a good start, away he would go down the road and tackle the first unfortunate dog he came across. If the dog happened to be looking, Bhaloo would pass on to the next. Having got the animal firmly by the hind quarters he would look round at you as much as to say: 'this is the brute who tripped you up and I have got him for you.'

Bhaloo and Nicholas, a large St. Bernard, were real pals. Nicholas had a tail that wagged, and anything that wagged was a joy to Bhaloo. He would take up his position behind Nicholas and stand up on his hind legs, never a very safe position for him. When the tail passed him, Bhaloo had a shot at it and if he missed it, he took one, very unsteady, step forward and waited for the next wag to bring the tail back again. It came, of course, but Bhaloo had forgotten that he had taken a step forward. The slap did not meet the tail as had been intended, but the tail met him across the face upsetting his balance. Bhaloo would then put his head on one side, with his paws up to avoid the tail smiting him again. This attitude was generally too much for Rosie, a very wiry and active little spaniel. With one bound she would descend on him from the rear, catch him by the ear and roll him over on to his back. Putting himself into an upright position from lying on his back was a laborious

process for Bhaloo and by the time it was accomplished he had no dignity left.

Being very friendly, he was quite prepared to greet any wayfarer he met, and if not looking, even to trip him up. Now and again he would meet a hill-man with a 'kilta' (a basket which fits the back, the shape of a megaphone, which most hill men carry), and if the latter liked the look of Bhaloo he would go the length of extracting a half dried apricot or a bit of stale 'chuppatti' from his kilta and give it to him. In time the bear came to connect kiltas with food. This part is quite comprehensible, but what devilment made him adopt the tactics I am about to explain, I never made out.

If he saw a man coming along in the distance, Bhaloo would find business in a thick bush or behind a rock and so be left behind. As the man approached his hiding place he would be confronted by a mighty 'ouf ouf' and find a half grown bear standing in front of him. On such occasions even a small cub looks very big. The wretched man would drop his basket and fly down the hill as hard as he could go. Bhaloo would watch him go, and then deliberately turn and make for the kilta, have the contents out on the road in no time, and sample all the edible things.

This became a regular proceeding with him when out for walks, and I had finally to warn men as they passed me not to be alarmed if they met him round the corner. Nonetheless, the majority were alarmed. Bhaloo accompanied me down to the plains and had his first ride in a train at Kalka. This was before

the Simla-Kalka Railway had even been thought of. In the brake-van there was no room for him and in the two dog boxes attached to the train, were already several dogs, so what would be his fate? The guard said I had better take him into my carriage as there would be nobody else travelling, in all probability, so Bhaloo and I took possession of the one and only first class carriage.

Shortly after two men who had been shooting in the hills arrived but were fortunately rather taken with the bear and made friends with him at once. All went well until within a couple of minutes of starting time when a third traveller appeared on the scene. He was very stout and Bhaloo was near the door. I asked if he had any objection, but had not got halfway through the sentence when he replied—'*Objection, objection, objection*, to travelling with a savage brute like that! I certainly have, Guard, Guuaarrd, can't you hear, remove this animal to the dog box.' The guard arrived and hesitatingly took the end of the chain. Bhaloo prepared for a game of hide-and-seek, slowly got on to his hind legs and, with one paw on the edge of the door, aimed a slap at the guard and said 'wouf'. The guard dropped the chain, the very stout gentleman's rosy countenance visibly paled, and he made a hasty retreat. A very big 'DA' issued from parched lips, and the 'M' was wafted back on the breeze from some distance off. I next expected to find the station master and the entire staff arrive and eject Bhaloo and master from the carriage, but just then the train streamed off and we saw a very burly black entering the next compartment,

a 2nd Class, while not a soul in our carriage could speak for laughing.

His two new friends regaled Bhaloo with fruit and he had a heavenly time until we changed trains in Ambala. The crowd rather upset him, and when somebody trod on his toe he made himself both heard and felt. We arrived at our destination late in the evening and the problem was what to do with the bear during the night, as I did not like to leave him chained outside on account of the number of pariah dogs about. The only thing to be done was to empty the bathroom of the dak bungalow and put him there.

Bhaloo, however, had his own ideas on the subject and I was awakened in the middle of the night by a terrible commotion in the compound, and went out to find him surrounded by 'pi' dogs and in a very nasty temper. His first night cost me Rs. 5 as he had pulled out all the bricks from one wall of the room and let himself out. He was then tied up in an empty stable and the night passed without further mishap. After breakfast we went for a stroll into the country, but to get out we had to pass a sweet stall. Bhaloo smelt sweets and promptly made for them. The very portly gentleman in charge objected and waved a fly flap at him, but he had made an entrance and had just begun to sample a basket of very yellow looking stuff and was not easily to be discouraged. The portly gentleman then struck him and Bhaloo jumped up hurriedly, but in doing so pulled over the whole tray, which in turn dislodged another. The 'bunnia' shouted loudly and so did Bhaloo. The dogs, seven of them, also rushed in.

Chaos reigned. What with dogs hunting for rats and bears hunting for sweets, the contents of the sweet stall were soon deposited in the street. Bhaloo was pulled out and tied up and the portly gentleman made comparatively happy with a small note and we continued our walk.

We had gone about two miles when an *ekka* with four prospering traders in it, returning from a timber auction, was seen coming down the road. The horse shied and went off into the ditch and the *ekka* followed. Not being adapted for cross country running a wheel came off, shooting the occupants not very gracefully on to mother earth.

I helped to put the *ekka* right side up, apologised to the prosperous traders and tipped the *ekka-wallah*. In making up accounts I discovered that Bhaloo's escapades in the last 24 hours had cost me more pay than I had drawn in 48, so it was obvious we should either have to part company or retrace our wandering footsteps to our beloved jungles, where such things as dak bungalows, sweet shops and *ekkas* cease from troubling, and my pockets would be at rest.

It ended by Bhaloo going to a neighbouring zoo. I have seen him every year since and he has grown out of all recognition.

Tippitty, A Flying Squirrel

by C.H. Donald

To know 'Tippitty' was to love her, and I had known her for very long. Men called her a 'ripper' and women went crazy about her, and called her a 'little darling', and many other similar endearing epithets. I always look back to the evenings when Tippitty sat on a curtain rod, with a delightful furry muffler round her neck, and looked down on me from her place of vantage, preparing for her usual spring to my shoulder.

Tippitty, I must tell you, was not a naughty little girl with a penchant for climbing up curtain poles, but a little rodent

commonly called a Flying Squirrel, and known to naturalists as *Pteromys inormous*, the large red flying squirrel, and must on no account be mistaken for the Flying Fox, which has nothing to do with Tippitty's family.

She was brought to me when only a few days old, together with a sister and a brother. The latter, however, were both injured by the fall of the tree in which they had their home and died a few hours after. Tippitty survived, and grew into a splendid specimen, in all the glory of her wonderful chestnut-red coat and two feet of bushy tail. She knew she was fascinating even at a very early age, and nothing delighted her more than to show off her lovely tail. Her one drawback as a pet was that she was nocturnal and so was most lively when it was time for ordinary mortals to be in bed.

She lived in a little box with two partitions; the inner one—her bedroom—was fitted up with a little nest of feathers and cotton wool, and a tiny door led from it into the bigger sitting room, where also she dined. The former was in darkness whereas the latter had sides and top of wire netting so was quite light. If her master was very busy and could not entertain Tippitty, or happened to be dining out, she was given her dinner in her own little room, but as a rule, master and Tippitty dined together and, in fact, spent most evenings in each other's company.

The door of her sitting room being usually open, Tippitty would announce the fact that she was awake by giving a low growl and issuing therefrom in a succession of long and not very graceful jumps. She would make her way to the nearest

From *Companionous—Feathered, Furred and Scaled* (Bombay, 1917).

table and there indulge in a tremendous stretch, extending her fore-legs to the full in front of her and her hind-legs as far as they could go behind her. Her head would first rest on the right fore-foot and then on the left, her tail making circles in the air in the meantime. After her stretch would come her toilet, about which she was most particular, like all her sex. Tippitty would sit erect and carefully get to work with both her little hands. Beginning with the tip of her nose she would gradually work over the whole of her face and head, the tail would be her last, but by no means her least, care. She would start on it from the very root, bending her back double to get at it and then gradually work up to the tip, holding it firmly between her fore-paws. Her toilet finished, Tippitty would have a look round, take one jump off the table and race up the nearest curtains to the pole above. There she would sit, her tail coiled round her neck and those great big black eyes of hers looking solemnly down, and sooner or later she would leap right across the room on to my shoulder.

Don, a field spaniel, and Brock, a large shaggy Tibetan sheep dog, were Tippitty's best friends. Brock's great bushy tail afforded Tippitty much amusement as well as shelter in time of danger, for Tippitty knew friend from foe and the approach of a stranger was the signal for her to make use of Brock's tail as a hiding place.

Her behaviour was not always that of a well brought up young lady and truth obliges me to admit that, during meals, it was advisable to keep her tied at one end of the table. I have

already said she had a lovely tail, but its beauty was sometimes marred after passing through the soup—and so was the taste of the soup! Her own dinner consisted of milk and, occasionally, custard. Puddings she loved as much as any school-boy and stewed fruit kept her happy all evening. The hardest hill walnut was child's play to her sharp teeth. It took her about ten minutes to make a hole in the nut and then her long teeth and tongue would soon fetch out most of the kernel.

Tippitty was the means of my solving a problem in natural history regarding which a controversy had raged for many months. The Himalayan Nutcracker *Nucifraga bemispila* had been credited with the holes one frequently found in walnuts in the Himalayas. The writer tested the truth of the assertion by placing walnuts under a tree where a pair of Nutcrackers were wont to come. The birds turned over the nuts but did not attempt to break them. After this a few nuts were collected in which Tippitty had already made the holes, and placed under the same tree and carefully watched. In due course the birds came along and at once selected the bored walnuts and began pecking at them and working their beaks inside the holes, proving that they were incapable of boring the holes themselves, but were not above taking the remains of Tippitty's dinner. However, Nutcrackers have nothing to do with the life history of Tippitty, and I must apologize to her and my reader, for the digression.

Flying squirrels are said to lap their drink, but Tippitty was *much* too lady-like to make any such fuss over her milk. She was

usually in rather a hurry for it, and consequently more of her face went into the saucer than was intended by nature, with the result that a certain amount of liquid went up her nose and made Tippitty sneeze and splutter. Sometimes several attempts were made before she really settled down to have a good drink, but when she did she got her lips well into the milk and no attempt was made to lap.

She frequently accompanied me and the dogs on an afternoon stroll, after being ruthlessly pulled out of her box. For the first 100 yards or so she was perfectly happy, jumping along behind. A flying squirrel's natural mode of progression when on the ground is a succession of jumps: not the graceful little hop of the striped squirrel, but rather a lumbering gallop with all four feet in the air at the same time, and the tail held straight up in the air, the last four inches or so curling over. This not being adapted for long distances, Tippitty would soon overshoot her endurance and come to a halt. If I were near, she would make for my legs and be up on my shoulder in the twinkling of an eye, or if Brock or Don happened to be at hand, she would spring on to one of their backs and get a free ride. An oak or a deodar tree invariably attracted her attention and she would make her way to the extreme end of a branch and nibble off the young leaves. The point of the stem which grew out of the branch appealed to her most and she would pick off leaf after leaf just nibbling the juicy end of it and throw the rest away. However, she was quite happy on any tree or shrub and found something to eat on all.

As I have already said, Tippitty was nocturnal and woke up a little after sunset if left to herself. Provided she did not get a good dinner she would be prepared to play and look about for odds and ends to nibble at all night through. I very soon discovered that a good feed just before I went to bed had the effect of making her sleepy too. On 'custard' nights, Tippitty would invariably over-eat, and that meant sleeping solidly till the early hours of the morning. She very seldom woke me during the night. As a rule, I would wake up to find a warm, soft, furry ball curled up against my neck, but occasionally the awakening would be much ruder and I would find Tippitty having a lovely game with my toes, my ears or my hair.

There was something extraordinarily fascinating about her every movement and her little 'chirrup' of pleasure was very sweet to hear. Tippitty had an assortment of calls and her growl was most alarming and would have done credit to an animal ten times her size. She had a temper of her own, I am sorry to say, which every member of the household, master and dogs included, had occasion to remember. It showed for a second and was gone again as suddenly as it had been roused, but in that instant her sharp claws had torn some offending hand, or her terrible teeth had sent a dog howling out of the room.

Poor Tippitty! Her end was tragic in the extreme. We'll hope it was also painless. She had been tied up just before dinner, but somehow the end of the chain had got unfastened from the leg of the chair. I heard her hopping about on the boards of the verandah and dragging her chain behind her.

I went out to bring her back but in that instant something flashed past me. There was a tiny squeal and a fox had poor Tippitty in its relentless jaws. Her death was avenged, but that is another story.

Before concluding the biography of Tippitty it might be as well to give the reader an insight into the life and ways of the Flying Squirrel in its wild state, and explain exactly what it is. Though very closely allied to the ordinary squirrels with which everyone is familiar, the Flying Squirrels can easily be distinguished by the membrane uniting their limbs, which extends to the toes and forms a parachute when the limbs are extended. To make the parachute still more effective, the membrane is supported by a small bony cartilage attached to the outside of the wrist (ulnar). The leap of the Flying Squirrel is said to be 60 to 80 yards, but I can safely say it is well over double that distance at times, as I have seen one go right across a valley nearer 200 yards in extent. It can only 'fly' downhill, using the parachute to buoy it up. On approaching the tree it means to settle on, the head is raised and the tail lowered so that the parachute then acts *against* the wind as a brake, bringing it slowly against the tree. The tail, to some extent, acts as a rudder, but the change of direction is really made by a slight drawing in of the extended limbs, on the opposite side to which the animal wishes to turn.

The nest of this species is invariably in the hole of a tree, preferably oak, but deodars, firs, chestnuts, walnuts and birch are impartially selected when oak is not at hand. It is composed

of lichen and moss, with a sprinkling of feathers and hair. The family *Sciuridae* which comprises squirrels, flying squirrels, and marmots, is well distributed throughout India and the genus *Pteromys*, comprising some six species, is represented from the high upland forests of the Himalayas down to the most southerly forests of the peninsula. Tippitty's species is essentially a dweller of the higher ranges of the Himalayas ranging from 5,000 to 11,000 feet.

The Man-eater of Mundali

by B.B. Osmaston
(*Imperial Forest Service*)
*From his memoirs**

Jaunsar-Bawar, which includes Chakrata, is an outlying portion of the Civil District of Dehra Dun. It is situated north-west of Dehra between Mussoorie and Simla and is very mountainous throughout, the hills ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 ft in altitude. These hills, except on southern aspects, are mostly clothed with forests of Deodar, Fir, Pine, Oak, etc., and mountain streams and torrents flow through the valleys. In summer the climate is pleasantly cool, but very cold in winter

with heavy falls of snow down to 6,000 ft. There was much game in the form of *gooral*, barking deer, *serow*, musk deer and leopard; also partridges, *chukor* and several species of pheasants. *Sambhar* and pig were scarce, and *chital* absent altogether. Tigers usually avoid these hill forests, not because they dislike the cold, but because they find feeding themselves difficult, if not impossible. In the plains *sambhar* and *chital* constitute their main food supply, but these are scarce or non-existent in the hills.

Moreover, a tiger is unable to pursue and catch smaller game, such as *gooral* which take refuge on steep slopes where a tiger, due to its weight cannot safely follow. In 1878 however a tigress suddenly appeared beyond Chakrata, at about 9,000 feet; she is believed to have come up from Dehra Dun, having followed the Gujars' buffaloes on their spring migration up to the hills.

These Gujars are a nomadic race of graziers, and own herds of magnificent buffaloes which they maintain largely in the Government forests, feeding them mainly on loppings from trees. During the winter months, they keep to the forests in the plains, but in April they start driving their cattle up to the hills where they remain throughout the summer and rains, at altitudes between 7,000 and 11,000 feet; and in October, before the advent of snow, they take them down again.

But to return to the tigress in question. Having followed the Gujar's cattle up to the hills, killing and feeding on stragglers from the herds during their 60–80 miles slow-moving trek, she then settled down to an easy and comfortable existence in the

* Courtesy, Henry Osmaston

vicinity of the Gujar's camps, without any food problems whatever! But when October came, and the Gujar's started driving their cattle down to the plains again, she seems to have either accidentally missed their departure, or, more likely, to have been more or less compelled to remain behind because she had meanwhile produced 3 babies which were still entirely dependent on her, and far too young to travel.

She thus, all at once, found herself and her cubs stranded, up at some 8,000 to 9,000 feet with snow in the offing, and normal food supplies virtually non-existent. She and her family soon became desperately hungry and, one day while she was out hunting, she suddenly came across a man at close quarters, and, in her extremity, she killed him. She found that he was both ridiculously easy to kill, and also excellent to eat.

This led to her rapidly becoming a confirmed, notorious and cunning man-eater, taking toll from villages scattered over some 200 square miles of mountainous country. The villagers were terror-stricken and would not go out except in large parties. Even so, her killings continued, either by day or by night, and more often than not it was a woman she selected.

She brought up her three cubs on human flesh and they too all became man-eaters. They however lacked the cunning of their mother and were killed long before she was accounted for: one was killed by a spring-gun set by Mr. Lowrie at Lokhar; another was shot near Chakrata by Mr. Smythies, who obtained the assistance of British soldiers to surround the valley in which the young tiger had been located; the third cub was found dead

under a tree which appeared to have been struck by lightning. The tigress however had continued in her evil ways, until in 1879 a reward of Rs 500 was placed on her head. This had resulted in many visits from experienced *shikaris* but none had ever succeeded in getting in touch with her, and the reward remained unclaimed for ten long years.

That was the picture when I arrived at Mundali on the 11th May 1889. I had been in India less than 5 months and had never seen a tiger outside a zoo. The day I reached Mundali, I heard that the tigress had killed a buffalo calf about half a mile from our camp. The latter included Forest Students from Dehra Dun, in the charge of Mr. Fernandez, Deputy Director of the Forest School. I determined to tie up a *machan* in a tree near the kill, from which I hoped to get a shot at the tigress when she returned. But the same idea had also occurred to several of the students, and I foresaw little chance therefore of anyone at all getting a shot that way. A young fellow called Hansard however, one of the students, approached me with a suggestion that we should explore the steep ravine below the kill at mid-day, when we thought the tigress would be enjoying a siesta. I readily agreed and we set out, I being armed with a double-barrelled 12-bore rifle by Riley, firing a conical shell propelled by 6 drams of black powder, which was kindly lent me by Mr. Fernandez. Hansard had only a small bore rifle which I later realised was quite inadequate for the purpose.

The kill was situated at the head of a precipitous ravine which had extremely steep wooded sides, and a small spring-

stream at the bottom, bubbling down through a wild confusion of countless large and small boulders. It was under the lee of one of these large rocks that we were hoping perhaps to find the tigress asleep; and with that end in view, we cautiously started off down the ravine,—I on one side fairly close to the stream, while Hansard was some 20 yards higher up on the other side.

The going was very difficult and slow, and we had not managed to get very far, when I suddenly heard a fierce snarling noise from moderately high up on the further side of the ravine. I momentarily imagined that it was Hansard trying to pull my leg; but, upon raising my head to tell him to shut up and keep quiet, I saw to my horror, the tigress on top of him, biting at his neck.

It is extraordinary with what lightning speed thoughts can flash through one's brain in an emergency of that nature; and, in a matter of perhaps half a second, I knew that I must shoot—whatever the danger of hitting Hansard, instead of, or as well as the tigress—and in the next half second I had fired. The tigress immediately let go of Hansard and came charging down at me. I fired the second barrel as she came bounding down (but without effect), and then dropped the empty rifle and fled for my life down the precipitous ravine, leaping wildly from boulder to boulder in my head-long flight, and expecting every moment to get the tigress on top of me. But after I had covered some distance without either breaking my neck or being seized by the tigress, I realised that I was

not being pursued after all; and I decided to cut straight back through the forest to the camp, in order to get another rifle, and help for Hansard.

Several of the students and their servants accompanied me back to the spot, bringing with them a camp-bed for use as a stretcher. Upon arrival there, we found Hansard lying unconscious by the stream, and the tigress lying dead a few yards away. It was my first shot that had actually killed her, the second one having merely grazed one of her fore-paws.

We afterwards ascertained from Hansard that he never knew that she was stalking him until she was on him, and he certainly never had a chance to fire his rifle. He was wearing a thick woollen muffler rolled up round his neck which doubtless did much to save him. In spite of this however the tigress had mauled him terribly, one hole penetrating from below his ear into his throat. Bits of the red muffler were adhering to the claws of the tigress when we found her in the water. She was old, though exactly how old it was impossible to say; but her canine teeth were worn right down almost to the gums and one, at least, was badly decayed. Otherwise she appeared to be in good health, and had a very good coat. Her length was 8 feet 6 inches.

Hansard and the tigress were at once carried to the camp where the former's wounds were attended to by the Assistant Surgeon attached to the school-camp, and two days later he was carried 60 miles across the hills to Mussoorie on a stretcher. There he remained in the Station Hospital for some months

and, when he was eventually discharged, in reasonably good shape, he married his hospital nurse, and they went to Ceylon where he had another forest appointment.

Some years later I met his son who said that his father had eventually died from the after effects of that terrible encounter.

The day after the tigress was brought into camp, the villagers flocked in from near and far to see the body of the dreaded beast which had carried off so many of their friends and relations during the past ten years.

Many of them cut off little bits of the tigress' flesh and hung them as charms round the necks of their children. The killing of the tigress was reported to the Government and the reward of Rs 500 was duly paid to me; this was shared with Hansard who certainly deserved it at least as much as I did.

[More than a hundred years later, a notice-board at Mundali still marks the spot where Osmaston shot the man-eater.—Ed.]

Garm—A Hostage

by Rudyard Kipling

One night, a very long time ago, I drove to an Indian military cantonment called Mian Mir to see amateur theatricals. At the back of the Infantry barracks a soldier, his cap over one eye, rushed in front of the horses and shouted that he was a dangerous highway robber. As a matter of fact he was a friend of mine, so I told him to go home before anyone caught him; but he fell under the pole, and I heard voices of a military guard in search of someone.

The driver and I coaxed him into the carriage, drove home swiftly, undressed him and put him to bed, where he waked next morning with a sore headache, very much ashamed. When his uniform was cleaned and dried, and he had been shaved

and washed and made neat, I drove him back to barracks with his arm in a fine white sling, and reported that I had accidentally run over him. I did not tell this story to my friend's sergeant, who was a hostile and unbelieving person, but to his lieutenant, who did not know us quite so well.

Three days later my friend came to call, and at his heels slobbered and fawned one of the finest bull-terriers—of the old-fashioned breed, two parts bull and one terrier—that I had ever set eyes on. He was pure white, with a fawn-coloured saddle just behind his neck, and a fawn diamond at the root of his thin whippy tail. I had admired him distantly for more than a year; and Vixen, my own fox-terrier, knew him too, but did not approve.

'E's for you,' said my friend; but he did not look as though he liked parting with him.

'Nonsense! That dog's worth more than most men, Stanley,' I said.

'E's that an' more. 'Tention!'

The dog rose on his hind legs, and stood upright for a full minute.

'Eyes right!'

He sat on his haunches and turned his head sharp to the right. At a sign he rose and barked thrice. Then he shook hands with his right paw and bounded lightly to my shoulder. Here he made himself into a necktie, limp and lifeless, hanging down on either side of my neck. I was told to pick him up and throw him in the air. He fell with a howl, and held up one leg.

'Part o' the trick,' said his owner. 'You're goin' to die now. Dig yourself your little grave an' shut your little eye.'

Still limping, the dog hobbled to the garden-edge, dug a hole and lay down in it. When told that he was cured he jumped out, wagging his tail, and whining for applause. He was put through half a dozen other tricks, such as showing how he would hold a man safe (I was that man, and he sat down before me, his teeth bared, ready to spring), and how he would stop eating at the word of command. I had no more than finished praising him when my friend made a gesture that stopped the dog as though he had been shot, took a piece of blue-ruled canteen-paper from his helmet, handed it to me and ran away, while the dog looked after him and howled. I read:

SIR—I give you the dog because of what you got me out of. He is the best I know, for I made him myself, and he is as good as a man. Please do not give him too much to eat, and please do not give him back to me, for I'm not going to take him, if you will keep him. So please do not try to give him back anymore. I have kept his name back, so you can call him anything and he will answer, but please do not give him back. He can kill a man as easy as anything, but please do not give him too much meat. He knows more than a man.

Vixen sympathetically joined her shrill little yap to the bull-terrier's despairing cry, and I was annoyed, for I knew that a man who cares for dogs is one thing, but a man who loves one

dog is quite another. Dogs are at the best no more than verminous vagrants, self-scratchers, foul feeders, and unclean by the law of Moses and Mohammed; but a dog with whom one lives alone for at least six months in the year; a free thing, tied to you so strictly by love that without you he will not stir or exercise; a patient, temperate, humorous, wise soul, who knows your moods before you know them yourself, is not a dog under any ruling.

I had Vixen, who was all my dog to me; and I felt what my friend must have felt, at tearing out his heart in this style and leaving it in my garden. However, the dog understood clearly enough that I was his master, and did not follow the soldier. As soon as he drew breath I made much of him, and Vixen, yelling with jealousy, flew at him. Had she been of his own sex, he might have cheered himself with a fight, but he only looked worriedly when she nipped his deep iron sides, laid his heavy head on my knee, and howled anew. I meant to dine at the Club that night, but as darkness drew in, and the dog snuffed through the empty house like a child trying to recover from a fit of sobbing, I felt that I could not leave him to suffer his first evening alone. So we fed at home, Vixen on one side and the stranger-dog on the other; she watching his every mouthful, and saying explicitly what she thought of his table manners, which were much better than hers.

It was Vixen's custom, till the weather grew hot, to sleep in my bed, her head on the pillow like a Christian; and when morning came I would always find that the little thing had

braced her feet against the wall and pushed me to the very edge of the cot. This night she hurried to bed purposefully, every hair up, one eye on the stranger, who had dropped on a mat in a helpless, hopeless sort of way, all four feet spread out, sighing heavily. She settled her head on the pillow several times, to show her little airs and graces, and struck up her usual whiney sing-song before slumber. The stranger-dog softly edged towards me. I put out my hand and he licked it. Instantly my wrist was between Vixen's teeth, and her warning *aaarh!* said as plainly as speech, that if I took any further notice of the stranger she would bite.

I caught her behind her fat neck with my left hand, shook her severely, and said:

'Vixen, if you do that again you'll be put into the veranda. Now, remember!'

She understood perfectly, but the minute I released her she mouthed my right wrist once more, and waited with her ears back and all her body flattened, ready to bite. The big dog's tail thumped the floor in a humble and peace-making way.

I grabbed Vixen a second time, lifted her out of bed like a rabbit (she hated that and yelled), and, as I had promised, set her out in the veranda with the bats and the moonlight. At this she howled. Then she used coarse language—not to me, but to the bull-terrier—till she coughed with exhaustion. Then she ran round the house trying every door. Then she went off to the stables and barked as though someone were stealing the horses, which was an old trick of hers. Last she returned,

and her snuffing yelp said, 'I'll be good! Let me in and I'll be good!'

She was admitted and flew to her pillow. When she was quieted I whispered to the other dog, 'You can lie on the foot of the bed.' The bull jumped up at once, and though I felt Vixen quiver with rage, she knew better than to protest. So we slept till the morning, and they had early breakfast with me, bite for bite, till the horse came round and we went for a ride. I don't think the bull had ever followed a horse before. He was wild with excitement, and Vixen, as usual, squealed and scuttered and scooted, and took charge of the procession.

There was one corner of a village near by, which we generally passed with caution, because all the yellow pariah-dogs of the place gathered about it. They were half-wild, starving beasts, and though utter cowards, yet where nine or ten of them get together they will mob and kill and eat an English dog. I kept a whip with a long lash for them. That morning they attacked Vixen, who, perhaps of design, had moved from beyond my horse's shadow.

The bull was ploughing along in the dust, fifty yards behind, rolling in his run, and smiling as bull-terriers will. I heard Vixen squeal; half a dozen of the curs closed in on her; a white streak came up behind me; a cloud of dust rose near Vixen, and, when it cleared, I saw one tall pariah with his back broken, and the bull wrenching another to earth. Vixen retreated to the protection of my whip, and the bull paddled back smiling more than ever, covered with the blood of his enemies. That decided me to call him 'Garm of the Bloody Breast,' who was a great

person in his time, or 'Garm' for short; so, leaning forward, I told him what his temporary name would be. He looked up while I repeated it, and then raced away. I shouted 'Garm!' He stopped, raced back, and came up to ask my will.

Then I saw that my soldier friend was right, and that that dog knew and was worth more than a man. At the end of the ride I gave an order which Vixen knew and hated: 'Go away and get washed!' I said. Garm understood some part of it, and Vixen interpreted the rest, and the two trotted off together soberly. When I went to the back verandah Vixen had been washed snowy-white, and was very proud of herself, but the dog-boy would not touch Garm on any account unless I stood by. So I waited while he was being scrubbed, and Garm, with the soap creaming on the top of his broad head, looked at me to make sure that this was what I expected him to endure. He knew perfectly that the dog-boy was only obeying orders.

'Another time,' I said to the dog-boy, 'you will wash the great dog with Vixen when I send them home.'

'Does *he* know?' said the dog-boy, who understood the ways of dogs.

'Garm,' I said, 'another time you will be washed with Vixen.'

I knew that Garm understood. Indeed, next washing-day, when Vixen as usual fled under my bed, Garm stared at the doubtful dog-boy in the verandah, stalked to the place where he had been washed last time, and stood rigid in the tub.

But the long days in my office tried him sorely. We three would drive off in the morning at half-past eight and come

home at six or later. Vixen, knowing the routine of it, went to sleep under my table; but the confinement ate into Garm's soul. He generally sat on the verandah looking out on the Mall; and well I knew what he expected.

Sometimes a company of soldiers would move along on their way to the Fort, and Garm rolled forth to inspect them; or an officer in uniform entered into the office, and it was pitiful to see poor Garm's welcome to the cloth—not the man. He would leap at him, and sniff and bark joyously, then run to the door and back again. One afternoon I heard him bay with a full throat—a thing I had never heard before—and he disappeared. When I drove into my garden at the end of the day a soldier in white uniform scrambled over the wall at the far end, and the Garm that met me was a joyous dog. This happened twice or thrice a week for a month.

I pretended not to notice, but Garm knew and Vixen knew. He would glide homewards from the office about four o'clock, as though he were only going to look at the scenery, and this he did so quietly that but for Vixen I should not have noticed him. The jealous little dog under the table would give a sniff and a snort, just loud enough to call my attention to the flight. Garm might go out forty times in the day and Vixen would never stir, but when he slunk off to see his true master in my garden she told me in her own tongue. That was the one sign she made to prove that Garm did not altogether belong to the family. They were the best of friends at all times, *but*, Vixen explained that I was never to forget Garm did not love me as she loved me.

I never expected it. The dog was not my dog—could never be my dog—and I knew he was as miserable as his master who tramped eight miles a day to see him. So it seemed to me that the sooner the two were reunited the better for all. One afternoon I sent Vixen home alone in the dog-cart (Garm had gone before), and rode over to cantonments to find another friend of mine, who was an Irish soldier and a great friend of the dog's master.

I explained the whole case, and wound up with:

'And now Stanley's in my garden crying over his dog. Why doesn't he take him back? They're both unhappy.'

'Unhappy! There's no sense in the little man anymore. But 'tis his fit.'

'What is his fit? He travels fifty miles a week to see the brute, and he pretends not to notice me when he sees me on the road; and I'm as unhappy as he is. Make him take the dog back.'

'It's his penance he's set himself. I told him by way av a joke, afther you'd run over him so convenient that night, whin he was dhrunk—I said if he was a Catholic he'd do penance. Off he went wid that fit in his little head *an'* a dose av fever, *an'* nothin' would suit but givin' you the dog as a hostage.'

'Hostage for what? I don't want hostages from Stanley.'

'For his good behaviour. He's keepin' straight now, the way it's no pleasure to associate wid him.'

'Has he taken the pledge?'

'If 'twas only that I need not care. Ye can take the pledge for three months on an' off. He sez he'll never see the dog

again, an' *so*, mark you, he'll keep straight for evermore. Ye know his fits? Well, this is wan of them. How's the dog takin' it?'

'Like a man. He's the best dog in India. Can't you make Stanley take him back?'

'I can do no more than I have done. But ye know his fits. He's just doin' his penance. What will he do when he goes to the Hills? The docthor's put him on the list.'

It is the custom in India to send a certain number of invalids from each regiment up to stations in the Himalayas for the hot weather; and though the men ought to enjoy the cool and the comfort, they miss the society of the barracks down below, and do their best to come back or to avoid going. I felt that this move would bring matters to a head, so I left Terence hopefully, though he called after me—

'He won't take the dog, sorr. You can lay your month's pay on that. Ye know his fits.'

I never pretended to understand Private Ortheris; and so I did the next best thing—I left him alone.

That summer the invalids of the regiment to which my friend belonged were ordered off to the Hills early, because the doctors thought marching in the cool of the day would do them good. Their route lay south to a place called Umballa, a hundred and twenty miles or more. Then they would turn east and march up into the hills to Kasauli or Dugshai or Subathoo. I dined with the officers the night before they left—they were marching at five in the morning. It was midnight when I drove into my garden and surprised a white figure flying over the wall.

'That man,' said my butler, 'has been here since nine, making talk to that dog. He is quite mad. I did not tell him to go away because he has been here many times before, and because the dog-boy told me that if I told him to go away, that great dog would immediately slay me. He did not wish to speak to the Protector of the Poor, and he did not ask for anything to eat or drink.'

'Kadir Buksh,' said I, 'that was well done, for the dog would surely have killed thee. But I do not think the white soldier will come any more.'

Garm slept ill that night and whimpered in his dreams. Once he sprang up with a clear, ringing bark, and I heard him wag his tail till it waked him and the bark died out in a howl. He had dreamed he was with his master again, and I nearly cried. It was all Stanley's silly fault.

The first halt which the detachment of invalids made was some miles from their barracks, on the Amritsar road, and ten miles distant from my house. By a mere chance one of the officers drove back for another good dinner at the Club (cooking on the line of march is always bad), and there I met him. He was a particular friend of mine, and I knew that he knew how to love a dog properly. His pet was a big fat retriever who was going up to the Hills for his health, and, though it was still April, the round, brown brute puffed and panted in the Club verandah as though he would burst.

'It's amazing,' said the officer, 'what excuses these invalids of mine make to get back to barracks. There's a man in my

company now asked me for leave to go back to cantonments to pay a debt he'd forgotten. I was so taken by the idea I let him go, and he jingled off in an *ekka* as pleased as Punch. Ten miles to pay a debt! Wonder what it was really?

'If you'll drive me home I think I can show you,' I said.

So we went over to my house in his dog-cart with the retriever; and on the way I told him the story of Garm.

'I was wondering where that brute had gone to. He's the best dog in the regiment,' said my friend. 'I offered the little fellow twenty rupees for him a month ago. But he's a hostage, you say, for Stanley's good conduct. Stanley's one of the best men I have—when he chooses.'

'That's the reason why,' I said. 'A second-rate man wouldn't have taken things to heart as he has done.'

We drove in quietly at the far end of the garden, and crept round the house. There was a place close to the wall all grown about with tamarisk trees, where I knew Garm kept his bones. Even Vixen was not allowed to sit near it. In the full Indian moonlight I could see a white uniform bending over the dog.

'Good-bye, old man,' we could not help hearing Stanley's voice. 'For 'Eving's sake don't get bit and go mad by any measly pi-dog. But you can look after yourself, old man. *You* don't get drunk an' run about 'ittin' your friends. You takes your bones an' you eats your biscuit, an' you kills your enemy like a gentleman. I'm goin' away—don't 'owl—I'm goin' off to Kasauli where I won't see you no more.'

I could hear him holding Garm's nose as the dog threw it up to the stars.

'You'll stay here an' be'ave, an'—an' I'll go away an' try to be'ave, an' I don't know 'ow to leave you. I don't know—'

'I think this is 'damn' silly,' said the officer, patting his foolish fussy old retriever. He called to the private, who leaped to his feet, marched forward, and saluted.

'You here?' said the officer, turning away his head.

'Yes, sir, but I'm just goin' back.'

'I shall be leaving here at eleven in my cart. You come with me. I can't have sick men running about all over the place. Report yourself at eleven, *here*.'

We did not say much when we went indoors, but the officer muttered and pulled his retriever's ears.

He was a disgraceful, overfed door-mat of a dog; and when he waddled off to my cookhouse to be fed, I had a brilliant idea.

At eleven o'clock that officer's dog was nowhere to be found, and you never heard such a fuss as his owner made. He called and shouted and grew angry, and hunted through my garden for half an hour.

Then I said:

'He's sure to turn up in the morning. Send a man in by rail, and I'll find the beast and return him.'

'Beast?' said the officer. 'I value that dog considerably more than I value any man I know. It's all very fine for you to talk—your dog's here.'

So she was—under my feet—and, had she been missing, food and wages would have stopped in my house till her return.

But some people grow fond of dogs not worth a cut of the whip. My friend had to drive away at last with Stanley in the back-seat; and then the dog-boy said to me:

‘What kind of animal is Bullen Sahib’s dog? Look at him!’

I went to the boy’s hut, and the fat old reprobate was lying on a mat carefully chained up. He must have heard his master calling for twenty minutes, but had not even attempted to join him.

‘He has no face,’ said the dog-boy scornfully. ‘He is a *punnia-kooter* (a spaniel). He never tried to get that cloth off his jaws when his master called. Now Vixen-baba would have jumped through the window, and that Great Dog would have slain me with his muzzled mouth. It is true that there are many kinds of dogs.’

Next evening who should turn up but Stanley. The officer had sent him back fourteen miles by rail with a note begging me to return the retriever if I had found him, and, if I had not, to offer huge rewards. The last train to camp left at half-past ten, and Stanley stayed till ten talking to Garm. I argued and entreated, and even threatened to shoot the bull-terrier, but the little man was as firm as a rock, though I gave him a good dinner and talked to him most severely. Garm knew as well as I that this was the last time he could hope to see his man, and followed Stanley like a shadow. The retriever said nothing, but licked his lips after his meal and waddled off without so much as saying ‘Thank you’ to the disgusted dog-boy.

So that last meeting was over and I felt as wretched as Garm, who moaned in his sleep all night. When we went to the office

he found a place under the table close to Vixen, and dropped flat till it was time to go home. There was no more running out into the verandahs, no slinking away for stolen talks with Stanley. As the weather grew warmer the dogs were forbidden to run beside the cart, but sat at my side on the seat, Vixen with her head under the crook of my left elbow, and Garm hugging the left handrail.

Here Vixen was ever in great form. She had to attend to all the moving traffic, such as bullock-carts that blocked the way, and camels, and led ponies; as well as to keep up her dignity when she passed low friends running in the dust. She never yapped for yapping’s sake, but her shrill, high bark was known all along the Mall, and other men’s terriers ki-yied in reply, and bullock-drivers looked over their shoulders and gave us the road with a grin.

But Garm cared for none of these things. His big eyes were on the horizon and his terrible mouth was shut. There was another dog in the office who belonged to my chief. We called him ‘Bob the Librarian,’ because he always imagined vain rats behind the bookshelves, and in hunting for them would drag out half the old newspaper-files. Bob was a well-meaning idiot, but Garm did not encourage him. He would slide his head round the door, panting, ‘Rats! Come along, Garm!’ and Garm would shift one fore-paw over the other, and curl himself round, leaving Bob to whine at a most uninterested back. The office was nearly as cheerful as a tomb in those days.

Once, and only once, did I see Garm at all contented with his surroundings. He had gone for an unauthorised walk with

Vixen early one Sunday morning, and a very young and foolish artilleryman (his battery had just moved to that part of the world) tried to steal them both. Vixen, of course, knew better than to take food from soldiers, and, besides, she had just finished her breakfast. So she trotted back with a large piece of the mutton that they issue to our troops, laid it down on my verandah, and looked up to see what I thought. I asked her where Garm was, and she ran in front of the horse to show me the way.

About a mile up the road we came across our artilleryman sitting very stiffly on the edge of a culvert with a greasy handkerchief on his knees. Garm was in front of him, looking rather pleased. When the man moved leg or hand, Garm bared his teeth in silence. A broken string hung from his collar, and the other half of it lay, all warm, in the artilleryman's still hand. He explained to me, keeping his eyes straight in front of him, that he had met this dog (he called him awful names) walking alone, and was going to take him to the Fort to be killed for a masterless pariah.

I said that Garm did not seem to me much of a pariah, but that he had better take him to the Fort if he thought best. He said he did not care to do so. I told him to go to the Fort alone. He said he did not want to go at that hour, but would follow my advice as soon as I had called off the dog. I instructed Garm to take him to the Fort, and Garm marched him solemnly up to the gate, one mile and a half under a hot sun, and I told the quarter-guard what had happened; but the young

artilleryman was more angry than was at all necessary when they began to laugh. Several regiments, he was told, had tried to steal Garm in their time.

That month the hot weather shut down in earnest, and the dogs slept in the bathroom on the cool wet bricks where the bath is placed. Every morning, as soon as the man filled my bath, the two jumped in, and every morning the man filled the bath a second time. I said to him that he might as well fill a small tub specially for the dogs. 'Nay,' said he smiling, 'it is not their custom. They would not understand. Besides, the big bath gives them more space.'

The punkah-coolies who pull the punkahs day and night came to know Garm intimately. He noticed that when the swaying fan stopped I would call out to the coolie and bid him pull with a long stroke. If the man still slept I would wake him up. He discovered, too, that it was a good thing to lie in the wave of air under the punkah. Maybe Stanley had taught him all about this in barracks. At any rate, when the punkah stopped, Garm would first growl and cock his eye at the rope, and if that did not wake the man—it nearly always did—he would tiptoe forth and talk in the sleeper's ear. Vixen was a clever little dog, but she could never connect the punkah and the coolie; so Garm gave me grateful hours of cool sleep. But he was utterly wretched—as miserable as a human being; and in his misery he clung so closely to me that other men noticed it, and were envious. If I moved from one room to another, Garm followed; if my pen stopped scratching, Garm's head was thrust into my

hand; if I turned, half awake, on the pillow, Garm was up and at my side, for he knew that I was his only link with his master, and day and night, and night and day, his eyes asked one question—‘When is this going to end?’

Living with the dog as I did, I never noticed that he was more than ordinarily upset by the hot weather, till one day at the Club a man said: ‘That dog of yours will die in a week or two. He’s a shadow.’ Then I dosed Garm with iron and quinine, which he hated; and I felt very anxious. He lost his appetite, and Vixen was allowed to eat his dinner under his eyes. Even that did not make him swallow, and we held a consultation on him, of the best man-doctor in the place; a lady-doctor, who cured the sick wives of kings; and the Deputy Inspector-General of the veterinary service of all India. They pronounced upon his symptoms, and I told them his story, and Garm lay on a sofa licking my hand.

‘He’s dying of a broken heart,’ said the lady-doctor suddenly.

‘Pon my word,’ said the Deputy Inspector-General, ‘I believe Mrs. Macrae is perfectly right—as usual.’

The best man-doctor in the place wrote a prescription, and the veterinary Deputy Inspector-General went over it afterwards to be sure that the drugs were in the proper dog-proportions; and that was the first time in his life that our doctor ever allowed his prescriptions to be edited. It was a strong tonic, and it put the dear boy on his feet for a week or two; then he lost flesh again. I asked a man I knew to take him up to the Hills with him when he went, and the man came to the door with his

kit packed on the top of the carriage. Garm took in the situation at one red glance. The hair rose along his back; he sat down in front of me and delivered the most awful growl I have ever heard in the jaws of a dog. I shouted to my friend to get away at once, and as soon as the carriage was out of the garden Garm laid his head on my knee and whined. So I knew his answer, and devoted myself to getting Stanley’s address in the Hills.

My turn to go to the cool came late in August. We were allowed thirty days’ holiday in a year, if no one fell sick, and we took it as we could be spared. My chief and Bob the Librarian had their holiday first, and when they were gone I made a calendar, as I always did, and hung it up at the head of my cot, tearing off one day at a time till they returned. Vixen had gone up to the Hills with me five times before; and she appreciated the cold and the damp and the beautiful wood fires there as much as I did.

‘Garm,’ I said, ‘we are going back to Stanley at Kasauli. Kasauli—Stanley; Stanley—Kasauli.’ And I repeated it twenty times. It was not Kasauli really, but another place. Still I remembered what Stanley had said in my garden on the last night, and I dared not change the name. Then Garm began to tremble; then he barked; and then he leaped up at me, frisking and wagging his tail.

‘Not now,’ I said, holding up my hand. ‘When I say “Go,” we’ll go, Garm.’ I pulled out the little blanket coat and spiked collar that Vixen always wore up in the Hills, to protect her against sudden chills and thieving leopards, and I let the two

smell them and talk it over. What they said of course I do not know, but it made a new dog of Garm. His eyes were bright; and he barked joyfully when I spoke to him. He ate his food, and he killed his rats for the next three weeks, and when he began to whine I had only to say 'Stanley—Kasauli; Kasauli—Stanley,' to wake him up. I wish I had thought of it before.

My chief came back, all brown with living in the open air, and very angry at finding it so hot in the Plains. That same afternoon we three and Kadir Buksh began to pack for our month's holiday, Vixen rolling in and out of the bullock-trunk twenty times a minute, and Garm grinning all over and thumping on the floor with his tail. Vixen knew the routine of travelling as well as she knew my office-work. She went to the station, singing songs, on the front seat of the carriage, while Garm sat with me. She hurried into the railway carriage, saw Kadir Buksh make up my bed for the night, got her drink of water, and curled up with her black-patch eye on the tumult of the platform. Garm followed her (the crowd gave him a lane all to himself) and sat down on the pillows with his eyes blazing, and his tail a haze behind him.

We came to Umballa in the hot misty dawn, four or five men, who had been working hard for eleven months, shouting for our dâks—the two-horse travelling carriages that were to take us up to Kalka at the foot of the Hills. It was all new to Garm. He did not understand carriages where you lay at full length on your bedding, but Vixen knew and hopped into her place at once; Garm following. The Kalka Road, before the

railway was built, was about forty-seven miles long, and the horses were changed every eight miles. Most of them jibbed, and kicked, and plunged, but they had to go, and they went rather better than usual for Garm's deep bay in their rear.

There was a river to be forded, and four bullocks pulled the carriage, and Vixen stuck her head out of the sliding-door and nearly fell into the water while she gave directions. Garm was silent and curious, and rather needed reassuring about Stanley and Kasauli. So we rolled, barking and yelping, into Kalka for lunch, and Garm ate enough for two.

After Kalka the road wound among the hills, and we took a curricule with half-broken ponies, which were changed every six miles. No one dreamed of a railroad to Simla in those days, for it was seven thousand feet up in the air. The road was more than fifty miles long, and the regulation pace was just as fast as the ponies could go. Here, again, Vixen led Garm from one carriage to the other; jumped into the back seat, and shouted. A cool breath from the snows met us about five miles out of Kalka, and she whined for her coat, wisely fearing a chill on the liver. I had had one made for Garm too, and, as we climbed to the fresh breezes, I put it on, and Garm chewed it uncomprehendingly, but I think he was grateful.

'Hi-yi-yi-yi!' sang Vixen as we shot round the curves; 'Toot-toot-toot!' went the driver's bugle at the dangerous places, and 'Yow! yow! yow!' bayed Garm. Kadir Buksh sat on the front seat and smiled. Even he was glad to get away from the heat of the Plains that stewed in the haze behind us. Now and

then we would meet a man we knew going down to his work again, and he would say: 'What's it like below?' and I would shout: 'Hotter than cinders. What's it like up above?' and he would shout back: 'Just perfect!' and away we would go.

Suddenly Kadir Buksh said, over his shoulder: 'Here is Solon'; and Garm snored where he lay with his head on my knee. Solon is an unpleasant little cantonment, but it has the advantage of being cool and healthy. It is all bare and windy, and one generally stops at a rest-house near by for something to eat. I got out and took both dogs with me, while Kadir Buksh made tea. A soldier told us we should find Stanley 'out there,' nodding his head towards a bare, bleak hill.

When we climbed to the top we spied that very Stanley, who had given me all this trouble, sitting on a rock with his face in his hands and his overcoat hanging loose about him. I never saw anything so lonely and dejected in my life as this one little man, crumpled up and thinking, on the great grey hillside.

Here Garm left me.

He departed without a word, and, so far as I could see, without moving his legs. He flew through the air bodily, and I heard the whack of him as he flung himself at Stanley, knocking the little man clean over. They rolled on the ground together, shouting, and yelping, and hugging. I could not see which was dog and which was man, till Stanley got up and whimpered.

He told me that he had been suffering from fever at intervals, and was very weak. He looked all he said, but even while I watched, both man and dog plumped out to their natural sizes,

precisely as dried apples swell in water. Garm was on his shoulder, and his breast and feet all at the same time, so that Stanley spoke all through a cloud of Garm—gulping, sobbing, slavering Garm. He did not say anything that I could understand, except that he had fancied he was going to die, but that now he was quite well, and that he was not going to give up Garm any more to anybody under the rank of Beelzebub.

Then he said he felt hungry, and thirsty, and happy.

We went down to tea at the rest-house, where Stanley stuffed himself with sardines and raspberry jam, and beer, and cold mutton and pickles, when Garm wasn't climbing over him; and then Vixen and I went on.

Garm saw how it was at once. He said good-bye to me three times, giving me both paws one after another, and leaping on to my shoulder. He further escorted us, singing Hosannas at the top of his voice, a mile down the road. Then he raced back to his own master.

Vixen never opened her mouth, but when the cold twilight came, and we could see the lights of Simla across the hills, she snuffled with her nose at the breast of my ulster. I unbuttoned it, and tucked her inside. Then she gave a contented little sniff, and fell fast asleep, her head on my breast, till we bundled out at Simla, two of the four happiest people in all the world that night.

From *Thy Servant A Dog*, circa 1920

"Sandy" Beresford's Tigerhunt

by Charles A. Kincaid

Walter Beresford, known to his friends as "Sandy" because of his reddish-yellow hair, but styled by the Government of Bombay as Mr. Walter Trevelyn Beresford, District Superintendent of Police, Dharwar, lay in a long chair on the verandah of the traveller's bungalow at D——, some sixty miles from Dharwar cantonment. In front of him stretched a beautiful little lake, covered here and there with masses of water-lilies; in far corners of it dab-chicks disported themselves, while a bunch or two of teal and an odd "spotbill" sneaked about, half hidden by the reeds. "Sandy" had had an excellent dinner and felt at peace with the world; moreover that afternoon he had bagged his seventeenth panther.

The only fly in the ointment of his happiness was that he was alone. It was the first day of the Christmas holidays and he had expected his old friend Ford Halley, the D.S.P. of Belgaum, to be at D——with him. On his arrival that morning at the bungalow, a telegram was handed to him. He opened it and read the following words:

"Very sorry. Detained by a murder case. Joining you tomorrow."

Beresford was thus condemned to spend the next twenty-four hours alone. Happily Ford Halley would be there for Christmas; so the two friends would eat their Christmas dinner together. On Boxing Day the real business of the camp would begin. They would drive for a man-eating tiger that had been doing a lot of damage over an area of twenty miles round D——. Ford Halley was an old shikari and had at least a dozen tigers to his credit. Nor was Sandy Beresford a new hand. He had killed a couple of tigers, two or three bears and sixteen panthers.

During breakfast which Beresford, after a long ride in his car, ate with a first class appetite, his orderly, who also did duty as shikari, came in in a state of suppressed excitement. "Wagh! Sahib! Wagh!" he half-whispered, half-hissed at his master.

Beresford sprang to his feet. "Patayat Wagh? (A Tiger)? Biblia Wagh (A Panther?)."

"Mothe Thorile nahint. (It is not a tiger). Biblia Wagh ahe. (It is a panther)."

Beresford was at first disappointed, but on second thoughts felt a thrill of joy. If he got the panther it would make his

seventeenth, only three short of twenty. Twenty panthers were quite a respectable total for a man of only thirteen years' service. He turned to his shikari: "Well, Dhondu," he said, "how far off is it?"

"Sahib, it is only the other side of the lake. It killed a young buffalo last night and dragged the kill under a big tree. I have had the kill tied with a rope to the trunk and if the Sahib is ready to come this afternoon about four, I shall have a *machan* (stand) built and come and fetch the Sahib."

"Splendid!" said Beresford. "I shall be ready all right. You had better go back now and rig up the *machan*, so that all work at it may be finished before half past three. The panther might wake up then; and if he saw you at work I should get no chance of a shot."

The shikari salaamed and vanished.

Beresford took from its case his rifle, a .400 Jeffery cordite, that would stop a charging elephant. He glanced down the barrels and satisfied himself that they were beautifully clean; he put the rifle to his shoulder once or twice to see that it came up all right. Next he took out his shotgun which, loaded with SS, he carried always as a second weapon. These preparations finished, he lay in his long chair and smoked and dozed until tea time. A little before four his shikari appeared and the two men went off together.

The shikari had not underestimated the distance. The spot where the kill lay was only half an hour's walk from the bungalow; and when Beresford reached it, he found the man whom the

shikari had left in the *machan* in a great state of excitement. The panther, he said, had come and had looked at the dead buffalo from a distance of fifty yards. Then it had moved away. It was somewhere close by. The Sahib should get into the *machan* without delay.

Beresford, recognising the soundness of the advice, climbed as quickly as possible into his hiding place. Ten minutes later he saw dimly the outline of the panther, lying in some bushes fifty yards away. It was too difficult a shot to risk; so he waited. After some five to ten minutes, during which time Beresford's heart thumped so hard that he was afraid the panther would hear it, the brute rose and came towards the kill. It was evidently not very hungry; for instead of beginning at once to tear the flesh, it stood looking at the dead buffalo, as if uncertain with which bit to start its meal. Before it came to any decision, a bullet from Beresford's .400 rendered the question academic. The panther lay dead on its dead victim, of which it would never eat another mouthful.

Beresford came back in excellent spirits, the villagers carrying his seventeenth panther, fastened by its four feet to a long bamboo pole. He tubbed, changed and ate the dinner provided for him with a Spartan's appetite, although indeed his cook had served a meal that needed no hunger sauce. Beresford was now reclining in a long chair, as I have said, in the verandah of the bungalow and a golden coloured "peg" lay within reach of his right hand.

As he lay, he suddenly began to feel creepy. He remembered a story told him, when a boy, of his grandfather General

Beresford. The latter, when a young officer, had, shortly after the Mutiny, been posted to Dharwar, and had gone on a shooting trip to the very bungalow where "Sandy" now was. He had had a horrible experience. Lying in a long chair in the verandah where his grandson now lay, he had gone asleep. By him reclined his friend, a Captain Richardson, afterwards General Sir Archibald Richardson. He, too, had dropped off. Beresford had been awakened by a sharp pain in his left arm. Looking at it, he had seen a tiger standing beside him. It had seized his arm in its mouth and was dragging at it. Beresford had kept his head and had called to Richardson to fetch a rifle from within and shoot the brute. As the tiger was pulling at his arm, Beresford had to go with him, for he feared that if he resisted the tiger would kill him outright. He rose and walked alongside the tiger through the compound—a *via dolorosa* as terrible as any in history—hoping always that Richardson would be able to put the rifle together and load it before they reached the compound wall. The idea that Richardson would shew the white feather never entered his head; but Beresford knew that on reaching the compound wall the tiger would take his body into its mouth to leap the wall. He walked step by step, as slowly as he dared. Suddenly he heard a cheery voice and the steps of his friend racing behind him. The tiger seemed utterly contemptuous of the newcomer and stopped near the wall, preparatory to gathering its victim's body within its mighty jaws. The moment's pause proved its undoing. Richardson, reaching the tiger's side, knelt down; aiming at its heart, he pulled the

trigger. The brute's grip on Beresford's arm relaxed and it rolled over amid a cloud of smoke. It was stone dead. Richardson had saved his friend's life; but Beresford's left arm had had to be amputated; and "Sandy" remembered distinctly the empty sleeve that his grandfather used to wear pinned across his breast.

"Sandy" looked nervously round and felt very much inclined to run into his bedroom and bolt the door. Then he pulled himself together, smiled at his fears and said half aloud: "The modern tiger has far too wholesome respect for the Englishman to behave in that truculent fashion." To support his statement, he drained the whisky and soda at his side, settled himself once more in his chair and a few minutes later fell fast asleep.

He had a ghastly dream. He dreamt that he had gone to bathe in the lake in front of the bungalow. As he entered the water one of his sepoy's ran up and begged him not to, as it was full of "maghars". Beresford laughed at the warning and began swimming in the lake. Suddenly an acute pain in his left arm made him realise that the sepoy's warning was one to have followed. An alligator had seized him by the arm and was trying to pull him under. Struggle as "Sandy" Beresford might, he was helpless. He cried aloud for help and in doing so woke up, the perspiration streaming down his face.

He gave a sigh of relief and wanted to wipe his face with his handkerchief. He found he could not move his left arm which, moreover, hurt him a good deal. Surprised, he looked and saw that a tiger was standing by his chair and had seized

his left arm, just as the other tiger sixty years before had seized his grandfather's. By an involuntary trick of memory he called out "Richardson! Richardson!" Then his blood ran cold as he realised that he was alone in the bungalow. If only Ford Halley had been there; but there was no one. Even the shikari had gone to another village to tie up for the shoot on Boxing Day. There were, it is true, the servants in their quarters; but their doors were certainly barricaded from inside and they would be far too frightened to come outside, even if they knew how to handle a rifle. "Sandy" Beresford's case was indeed desperate, nevertheless he called out at the top of his voice "Qui Hai! Qui Hai!" hoping for some miracle to happen.

No one answered and the tiger, disturbed by the noise, was pulling at Beresford's left arm in a way that took no denial. Just as his grandfather had done, "Sandy" rose to his feet, and walked alongside the tiger down the verandah steps and across the compound towards the far wall. He continued to call at the top of his voice as he went. He knew that it was wasted breath; still hope dies hard.

At last, when he was close to the compound wall, he realised that he was a doomed man. Nevertheless he made a supreme effort to escape. Indeed he actually tore his arm out of the tiger's jaws; but the effort was useless. A stroke of the tiger's paw knocked him senseless to the ground. The tiger's teeth tearing through his heart and lungs effectually prevented his ever recovering consciousness. Taking Beresford's arm again into his mouth, the man-eater skilfully swung the dead man's

body across its shoulders and, easily clearing the compound wall, disappeared into the forest.

Next morning Beresford's cook and butler opened the doors of their quarters and peered outside. Ignorant of the previous night's tragedy, the cook made his master's tea and the butler carried it inside the bungalow. The latter was surprised not to find Beresford in his bedroom and he was still more astonished to notice that his master's bed had not been slept in. He called to the cook and the sepoys. They searched everywhere in vain. Then the butler saw drops of blood on the floor of the verandah leading into the compound. These they followed until they came to some softer earth where they could make out clearly an Englishman's footprints and a tiger's pugs. They guessed then that Beresford had fallen a victim to the very man-eater that he had come to kill.

When Ford Halley arrived about eleven, he found his friend's domestic staff in a state of utter perplexity and confusion. The shikari to whom Beresford had related what had happened to his grandfather was loudly proclaiming that the tiger was not an ordinary animal but a demon reincarnation of the beast that Richardson had shot. It was, therefore, useless to hunt it. All that man could do was to flee from the accursed spot as quickly as possible.

Ford Halley brushed aside this fantastic theory and restored some order among the household. He organised a search for Beresford's body and found his half-eaten remains a mile from the bungalow. These he had put into an improvised coffin and

sent into Dharwar, where they received a Christian burial. The rest of the holidays he spent hunting the man-eater and was able to put 'paid' to its account on the very last day, namely the second of January. In the meantime he reported his friend's death to the Bombay Government.

When His Excellency learnt the news of the tragedy he wrote a charming letter to Beresford's widowed mother, informing her—which was quite true—how much he regretted her son's death and how greatly he felt the loss of his valuable services.

From his brother officers Beresford received the epitaph usual in such cases:

"Beresford killed by a tiger! By Jove, what bad luck!" After a pause "Damn it all! Dharwar is a splendid climate. I wonder whether the Government would send me there if I applied for it."

From *Indian Christmas Stories* (1930)

A Terrible Bedfellow

by L. St. C. Grondona

Not a bad spot to camp, this, old men, and there looks to be a decent bit of pickin' for you two down there on that burnt flat, doesn't there?"

An Australian bushman invariably talks to his horse, and "Biljim" was no exception. Born and bred in Central Queensland, he was the typical long, wiry, sun-tanned product of the bush. Just at present he was travelling between two outback cattle stations.

Having removed the riding and pack-saddles, with their gear, Biljim unfastened his quart-pot from where it had been suspended from the "D's" of his saddle, and, still chatting absent-mindedly to his horses, led them over to the artesian

bore. A muffled roar that grew in intensity as they approached told of a magnificent flow of water.

These bores are driven down into the bowels of the earth to depths varying from a couple of hundred to three thousand or even four thousand feet, till the drill pierces the porous strata through which the seemingly limitless subterranean lakes or rivers of Australia flow. The clear, sparkling water, slightly mineralised, then gushes riotously up the narrow bore and pours forth in a steady flow, never varying perceptibly in its intense volume, which in many bores is over a million gallons a day. This glorious stream is directed into channels that carry it to the natural watercourses or creeks. It keeps these replenished for miles during the longest drought, when otherwise the creeks would be dry and the squatter's stock would fare ill. One happens on artesian bores in most unexpected places in the bush.

Biljim pulled the bits out of his horses' mouths and they drank their fill. Then taking the quart-pot he proceeded to souse the animals' backs thoroughly, at the same time rubbing vigorously to remove the sweat and dust that had gathered under the saddles. Having completed their toilet Biljim led his animals down to the burnt patch. This was a strip of country through which a bush fire had passed perhaps a month before. The new green shoots of herbage promised well for a good night's feed for the animals.

Biljim, having put a bell on Lofty and a pair of hobbles on Kate, told them to "get a good skin full," and strolled back to

camp. Here he lit a fire and put his quart-pot on to boil. He next removed his sleeping-kit from the pack-saddle, and selecting a decently clear patch of ground, spread out a strip of unbleached calico: A couple of grey blankets, with his saddle as pillow, made his modest bed for the night complete—except, of course, for the mosquito-net. Pulling his tomahawk from its leather carrier, fastened, as the quart-pot had been, to the "D's" of his saddle, he cut four strong stakes about four feet in length and, sharpening the ends, drove one in at each corner of his bunk. The mosquito net—absolutely indispensable in the Northern Australian bush—was then rigged. It was made of strong cheese-cloth in the shape of a box, to the four upper corners of which were attached tapes to suspend it from the tops of the four stakes or "bed-posts." The sun was just sinking in a characteristic ball of fire, its rays dimmed by the dense shimmering haze of the mid-summer evening. Darkness would be down with tropical suddenness on the grey, silent bush in a few minutes.

"By gum! I'll rinse those saddle-cloths out over at the bore before it gets dark," said Biljim to himself, and proceeded to carry out the idea, taking his towel and soap at the same time.

That little thoughtfulness for his horses brought Biljim nearer to his death than he has ever been since, even in the then little-dreamt-of days in Gallipoli and Northern France.

The walls of the box-net contained plenty of material, in order that they could be well tucked in all round under the blankets. The mosquitoes of Central Queensland are popularly

described as being "as big as tom-tits, as thirsty as vampires, and as vicious as a cornered dingo." However that may be, it is necessary to tuck in the net all round when rigging it, otherwise unpleasant visitors soon find their way underneath, and wait to pounce on their unhappy victim when he turns in.

Biljim was back in a quarter of an hour. He hung the saddle-cloths over a branch of a tree, knowing that they would dry in the warm night air long before morning. It was nearly dark now, and he threw a handful of mixed tea and sugar into the vigorously-boiling quart-pot and quickly lifted it off the fire with two sticks, so that it might draw while he got out his "tucker."

As the fire blazed up momentarily Biljim noticed that he had neglected to tuck in his mosquito-net, so he promptly remedied the trouble, and then sat down on a log to enjoy his solitary meal. He was in luck that evening, for he had spent the previous night at a station, and had been able to make some purchases at the station store—a tin or two of fish and some jam and odds and ends. In addition, the hut cook had loaded him up with "johnnie cakes," "brownie," and cooked fresh meat. The mosquitoes, however, were already too troublesome to allow him to linger over his food, and he hurried through the meal in order to get to his pipe again. Putting his stores away in a sugar bag, he hung it to the branch of a tree, hoping the ants would not find a hole through which to make raids on his meat and jam.

Biljim was possibly the only human being for twenty miles in any direction, but that troubled him not one whit. From the direction of the green flat came the comforting tinkle of Lofty's bell. His horses had good pasture; he had eaten his fill, his bed was ready to roll into, and that was all that mattered.

His pipe finished, he lost no time in getting his clothes off and crawling—innocent of aught but his grey shirt—under the mosquito-net. Biljim did not wear pyjamas. He'd seen them on "Jackaroos" (new chums), and had often meant to try them, but had not done so yet. Needless to say, he did not bother about getting under the blankets. Taking care that no part of his epidermis was touching the cheese-cloth he stretched himself out, and was soon fast asleep.

Suddenly Biljim awoke with a sensation of the utmost horror.

Gliding leisurely across his throat was the cold, silky-scaly body of a large snake. That same cold, silky-scaly body was travelling leisurely across his naked legs, and all up his right side and over his right upper arm he could feel the same leisurely sinuous movement.

Biljim lay as still as death. It was now bright moonlight, but, lying as he was, he could see nothing of his dreadful bedmate. The reptile continued its slow movement and gradually drew clear of the man's throat. A cold perspiration broke out on Biljim's head, face, and throat. His heart beat with a palpitation whose every thud threatened to burst something in his head. Nevertheless he lay still, not daring to move a finger. His mouth grew parched and dry, and his breath came in short gasps. He

was not a religious man—he had never been taught a formal prayer in his life, nor had he been inside a church—but he muttered an appeal of concentrated fervour. Mentally he cursed his carelessness in not tucking the net in securely, and hoped against hope that the snake had gone whence it had come, little dreaming that the reptile, though extremely anxious to get out, was unable to do so, as the net was now carefully tucked in all round, and it was impossible for it to escape.

As time passed the man had a vague hope that the snake had gone, but the next instant he felt the brute crawling across his legs again. This time it moved up the side of the bunk to about his waist, when it crawled up on to his stomach and then moved towards his left breast. Now poor Biljim could see the reptile's head quite plainly in the moonlight. It was broad and blunt, and though it showed black in that light Biljim guessed it to be the deadly brown desert snake. A picture of "Tommy," his best cattle-dog, dying in ten minutes after being bitten by just such a reptile, flew to his mind as the snake suddenly stopped still. It was obviously startled by the violent pulsations of the bushman's heart. His left breast literally heaved at every beat, and his whole side quivered. The snake's only movement now was to poke its black forked tongue threateningly in and out. Biljim felt its body stiffen perceptibly, as though drawing its muscles taut, and he knew only too well that this tightening of the muscles was preparatory to striking!

The suspense was awful. The cold perspiration stood out in great beads all over his body. The thudding of his heart grew

worse, and the snake became momentarily more uneasy. Suddenly it reared its head a foot in the air with a vicious jerk, and remained poised there, its head flattened abnormally and its cruel black eyes glistening fiendishly. The faintest movement of hand, arm, neck, or head, and those deadly fangs, Biljim knew, would be buried like lightning in his helpless, quivering flesh!

Biljim shut his eyes for fear that they would attract the venomous fangs, and waited in an agony of dread for the snake's next move. After a seemingly interminable period the reptile appeared to become reassured, for it dropped cautiously from the striking position and Biljim felt its muscles relax again as the brute continued its interrupted peregrination. Again the man lost touch with the cold, scaly body, and presently a reaction set in. He had the greatest difficulty in keeping himself from shivering violently, but by clenching his fists and tightening his muscles he managed to overcome this, though violent pains unaccountably racked his whole body. Fervently he hoped that his deadly companion had found its way out, but once more it was a forlorn hope.

Presently it dawned on Biljim that for some reason or other the snake could not get away, and he commenced to try and discover a method whereby he could get out of his terrible predicament. At first he had a wild idea of leaping madly to his feet, breaking the tapes of the net, and jumping clear of the bed and its occupant. He dismissed this however, as folly; without a doubt he would be bitten before he had even succeeded in getting to his feet. Another idea—to carefully pull

out part of the tucked-in net and so open an avenue of escape for the snake—seemed more practical, Nevertheless, it was very risky, for although he could occasionally feel a touch from the cold body, he had no idea where the head was. It seemed inevitable that he must take the risk, so very carefully he unclenched his right hand and with the utmost caution moved it towards the edge of the bed. Suddenly he heard the snake crawling over or round the saddle at the back of his head, and he checked the movement of his hand just as his fingers touched the net. His hand remained, as it were, "cupped," with the palm downwards. A few seconds later he felt a cold light touch on the side of his wrist, and the next instant what was undoubtedly the reptile's head was pushed in under the palm of his hand. The snake was trying every corner and crevice, seeking an outlet from its prison.

In that instant poor Biljim made up his mind. In the fraction of a second his fingers had clenched in a vice-like grip around the venomous head! Then, like a flash, the man leapt to his feet, the net ties giving way before the force of his jump. Madly he shook clear the clinging folds and staggered free, for by this time he was engaged in a queer and desperate struggle. The snake was a monster of its kind, and amazingly strong. Directly its head was gripped it coiled itself round the man's arm and throat, and strained with terrific force to pull its head free. Biljim's right arm was stretched out to its full extent. The snake had managed to pull its head back an inch or two, and the man's fingers had now a life-and-death grip around the top and bottom jaw.

With all his strength he dug his finger-tips into the soft under-jaw, and hooked them round the jaw-bones to better his grip. Meanwhile, with his left hand, he tore frantically at the two coils of the reptile that imprisoned his throat. Savagely the deadly thing writhed and tugged. The pressure of the coils around his arm was gradually weakening Biljim's muscles, whereas the snake showed no signs of weakening. After much struggling, however, the bushman managed to unwind the coils from his neck. He dexterously helped the snake to take a fresh turn round his chest, where he did not feel the strain, and had then two hands to deal with the venomous head. Gripping the snake again, close to his right hand—which, though rapidly losing its strength, was still sufficiently strong to hold the head steady—with the left hand he twisted the neck firmly and inexorably till a crack told that he had won! A quiver ran through the big brute's body and the coils grew slack.

Wearily Biljim shook them off, and threw the dead snake from him. He staggered towards his water-bottle, but before he reached it stumbled and fell in a dead faint.

When he recovered he decided to camp all next day, "just to give the horses a spell and a feed," as he told some drovers who happened along that track and camped with him next night. But they found the snake, and bit by bit gleaned the whole story from him. The reptile was indeed a deadly desert brown, and measured seven feet six inches in length. I was one of the drovers, so I know.

I met Biljim recently with a Queensland battalion in France. I reminded him of his adventure with the snake, and asked him if he remembered it.

“Jove!” he ejaculated, fervently. “You didn’t think I’d forgotten it, did you?”

From *The Wide World Magazine*

Chased By Bees

by E.F. Martin

While watching a number of apes the writer, a well-known African traveller, unwittingly disturbed a nest of angry and fierce bees, with decidedly unpleasant consequences.

Early on one of those glorious African tropical mornings, shortly after break of day, I set out from the quiet bungalow, accompanied by one of my servants, who carried my gun and kit.

Turning westward, I made my way through the still sleeping village of Lokoja, towards the foot of the towering eminence that frowns from its twelve hundred feet over the great valley of the Niger and Benue rivers. We soon reached the base of

the hill, and commenced our long and arduous climb. As the rise is rapid, and extremely steep, the view, as we climbed step by step, grew and expanded in the fading twilight of the early morning. Away beyond the converging rivers the ghostly mists were gradually rolling up into the distant hills and valleys on the eastern horizon. The silver, snake-like Benue seemed literally to be rising up out of the haze and glory of the coming day, out of the path of the rising sun, whose rays were beginning to shoot upward, high into the deep and beautiful blue. The grey-green of the shadowy world, spreading at our feet, was delightful in its calm, refreshing coolness, and seemed to be vaguely stirring in its sleep beneath that veil of mystery that lightly, though impenetrably, hangs over all that land. The cool, gentle breeze of the hillside fanned our cheeks and was very refreshing, as, from time to time, we halted to rest the beating of our hearts. Winding ever upward through rocky glades, we reached what I have always called the "roof of Lokoja"—the last fifty or hundred yards as steep as the roof of a house.

Having mastered this last and toughest part of our climb we emerged on to the flat table-land that, like a park, crowns the summit of this massive hill. Taking a path through the dewy grass leading to the edge of the spur above the village I soon came upon one of the most magnificent sights it is possible to witness—the rising of the sun over the valley of the Benue. It is a scene that, in glory, baffles description; where the dazzling rays drive out in one wild burst all the dark shadows of the night

that has gone, and light up the whole vast tableau of rolling plain, winding rivers, and rugged encircling hills with the blaze of day.

Taking the gun from Thomas, my servant, I again turned westward, and crossed the beautiful park-land with its signs of awakening life. Here and there from out of the leafy shadows of some giant trees that were scattered over the table-land the croaking or crowing of some great bird could be heard, and the myriad twitters of countless smaller birds, as they awoke to the knowledge of another day. Perhaps, also, some big-billed creature would, with great heavy-beating wings, dive from some bough overhead and, with ponderous flight, soar away through the morning air to its favourite pool or marshland. More than once a frightened deer sprang leaping away through the grass and bushes. Then the first bee settled upon a flower, and I knew that the sun had touched, at last, the sparkling grassland.

I paused at the farther edge of the plateau, overlooking a great sea of tumbling hills and narrow valleys as far as the eye could see. At my feet the hill fell away in a vast wooded sweep far down into the green valley below. I dropped over the rocky edge and quietly descended, followed by Thomas, through the pathless forest down among the shadows of the western slopes. I had not gone very far when I heard the words "Massa! Massa!" coming in an awed undertone from behind me.

Halting, I looked round to inquire the meaning of the call, when I saw Thomas pointing and gazing with most intense

excitement at some object on our right. Looking in the direction indicated, I discerned, some hundreds of yards away, what seemed to be the black forms of several men, all quite still.

Thomas at once volunteered the information that they were "Big bad monkey, sir!"

Being desirous of trying if I could not discover to what species these "big, bad monkey" belonged I approached cautiously, Thomas meanwhile protesting and entreating me to return to the top of the plateau.

Suddenly, about fifty or sixty yards away, a great black ape swung himself out of a tree. With one hand resting on a bough above his head, he stood or rather leaned, in a queer, ape-like, half man-like attitude, the knuckles of his disengaged hand resting on the ground and, turning his queer, grey face towards me, looked at us intently, with an expression of wild inquiry in his beady eyes. I was certainly rather startled by this sudden apparition, and brought my rifle to the ready in case of emergency.

I soon found that Thomas and I were the centre of a circle of inquiring eyes, as I counted no fewer than seven of these monsters staring at us from behind jutting rocks and trunks of trees. They were all black, with grey faces. Their arms were of enormous length, and the nearest ape seemed to be the size of a big, powerful man. I felt a great desire to shoot at the nearest beast, but two considerations prevented my doing so—the first being a sort of natural disinclination to shoot at any kind of monkey, owing, I suppose, to its resemblance to the

human species; the second consideration being the remembrance of what was once told me—namely, that if you kill one of these great apes, the rest will attack you and give you a very bad time of it.

Determining to watch and see what the brutes, if left unmolested, would do, I sought out a rounded mossy stone and sat down upon it, with my rifle across my knees. Thomas seated himself a few feet away from me.

We had not been there two minutes when a vague, dull murmur struck upon my ears. I could not locate it—if anywhere, it seemed to come up out of the valley. Thinking—it some distant waterfall I turned my attention once more in the direction of the monkeys, who were still gaping at us.

With a start, I suddenly noticed that the murmur had become a strange, indefinable roar, and then I knew! A great whirring, buzzing, whirling cloud of bees surged up between my legs, from under the mossy stone, and settled down upon me, on every square inch of my person—exposed or covered.

With a yell of pain I sprang up, beating my face, head, and neck with my hands, and blindly charged uphill, followed by Thomas, who was roaring at the top of his voice his eternal "Oh, sir, sir!"

We dashed on uphill, over boulders and slippery rocks, through prickly bushes, with ever that hideous swarming cloud of stinging bees surging round our heads, past where the apes had been—now scattered utterly, apparently frightened out of their lives by our tremendous and noisy charge. On reaching the top of the slope and emerging from the woods I dashed

across the plateau in the direction of a pool I knew of, shielding my aching face and head as best I could.

On reaching the pool, situated in a grove of trees, I flung myself bodily in, followed by the blindly faithful Thomas, and splashed and wallowed in the cool and shallow waters until the last of the bees had gone—drowned, mostly, in the pool where we had tumbled.

From *The Wide World Magazine* (1916)

In the Jaws of the Alligator

by P.C. Arnoult

A tragic tug-of-war between a Papuan islander and a monster alligator over the body of his wife, who was snatched from the canoe.

I had had a very busy day with the islanders. The time for the arrival of the Sydney steamer was drawing near. She was to pick up copra, rubber, sandal-wood, and tortoise-shell. The natives were coming in greater numbers every day, exchanging their goods for all kinds of merchandise. On the whole I was very pleased, for a fine cargo was accumulating, and the steamer would bring news from home, and also provisions and articles with which to trade with the natives.

Before retiring for the night I strolled on to the beach to enjoy the cool breeze which had sprung up after sunset and was blowing quietly from the Owen Stanley ranges on the mainland. The only noises to be heard were the murmur of the wavelets on the beach, the insistent hum of the mosquitoes, and now and then the heavy flap of the flying-foxes' wings or their shrieks as they fought one another for some choice fruit.

While watching the streaks of light made by the fire-flies in their antics under the wide-spreading leaves of the coco-nut trees, which were growing to the very edge of the beach, I heard on the water the splash of paddles and also the sounds of hushed voices. I stood still and listened. Presently I discerned a native canoe making at full speed for my landing-place.

I was rather surprised, and wondered what it could mean. The native village was on the other side of the island, and the natives never visited my station at night unless at my request. Without delay I made my way over to the landing-stage to see what was the matter.

Before I got there, however, the canoe had arrived, and I saw a native lift something out of it and make his way towards my house. I called to him. Hearing my voice, he turned towards me, and a few seconds later had deposited his burden at my feet. The next moment I recognised him, a young fellow known by the name of Ume; who often worked for me, either when there was copra to be made or rubber trees to be tapped. His burden was his wife Taita, who died a few moments later at my feet before I could do anything for her.

And this is the awful story Ume told me, every word of which I believe to be true, for his little son, who was in the canoe with them, made exactly the same statement. Often since, when friends have asked me, "Are the Papuans a brave race? Are they fond of their womenfolk?" I answer them by narrating this story, and leave them to draw their own conclusions.

That morning they had left their village to go to the Ethel River, on the mainland, to gather mussel-shells, with which to make lime to chew with their betel-nuts. Arriving at the desired rendezvous, they first made sure that there were no alligators about. Taita then began diving and collecting the shells from the mud on the bottom of the river. When she came to the surface her husband would take the shells from her and stack them in the bottom of the canoe. During the operations the man and the boy kept a sharp look-out for any sign of the dreaded saurians.

This went on until they had enough shells for their needs. Ume then helped Taita back into the canoe, and while she was washing the mud off her hands and arms he busied himself in making preparations for the return journey. Suddenly a cry of pain made him turn round, just in time to see a big alligator, which had approached undetected, drag his wife into the water. The brute had caught her by the right shoulder, and the poor woman was fighting fiercely to free herself from the reptile's hold.

Without a moment's hesitation the man jumped into the water, and, seizing his wife's body, he started matching his strength against the alligator's, each pulling his own way. A

more tragic tug-of-war it is difficult to imagine. But the pain was too great for the woman to endure, and after a short struggle she begged her husband to desist. "Let go!" she cried. "Let him have me! He'll drown me, then it will be all over. I cannot bear the pain any longer."

Reluctantly her husband let go his hold, but he did not give up the fight. On the contrary, he told Taita to keep on struggling, and, though entirely unarmed, he threw himself at the brute. He tried every conceivable way imaginable to make the monster let go its burden. But an alligator's bite is like a bulldog's, and when their teeth have closed on anything they never let go. In despair the husband climbed on to the brute's back and tried to poke its eyes out with his naked fingers. Finding this manœuvre made not the slightest impression upon his strange antagonist, he next tried to open its jaws with his bare hands. He might as well have tried to bend an iron bar. Finally, he endeavoured to break or twist back the alligator's paws, using his knee as a lever, but all to no avail. He exerted every ounce of strength and took terrible risks, but the brute was immovable.

The struggle had now gone on for quite a considerable time, and both he and his wife were getting exhausted. Still the stubborn, relentless jaws were closed and the long, pointed teeth were buried in the quivering flesh, and the small, wicked eyes obstinately blinked.

In spite of the terrible agony his wife was suffering, she was still quite conscious. But her strength was fast leaving her, and the pain was almost unendurable.

"Go back to the village," she shouted to her husband, "and tell them to come and avenge me! Let him drown me, for I cannot stand any more."

Suddenly Ume thought of his lance, which was in the bottom of the canoe. Turning round, he saw that the canoe and his little son of about eight, whom he had quite forgotten during the terrible struggle, were drifting slowly down the river, the current, though sluggish, proving too strong for the boy.

The man knew that if he ceased to worry the alligator it would dive and get away, so he called to his son to beach the canoe on the mud of the bank and bring him the lance. This the boy did, and swam back to the boat.

Now armed, the husband renewed the fight with added strength, and carefully pushing the lance between the roof of the mouth of the alligator and the body of his wife, he stuck it with all his strength down the animal's throat.

So far the alligator's attitude had been one of passive and stubborn resistance, but now, driven to it by the pain, it started lashing the water with its tail and its paws. Only by quick movements did the man escape being torn by those fearful paws. To and fro the great creature swayed in its efforts to get the lance out of its jaws. But the man held the weapon firmly and would not give in. Suddenly, throwing its head up, it opened its jaws and released the woman's body. Then, as if weary of the combat, it swam away at full speed.

Ume recovered the body and with it swam to the canoe. Having only sea-water with which to wash the gaping wounds,

and no cloth or bandages to dress them, he hurried back to the island; but the loss of blood and the injuries received had been too great, and Taita died a few moments after reaching the island.

This is only one of the many instances of heroic fights put up by the natives in defence of their dear ones against their commonest enemy which have come under my notice in Papua.

Probably some of my readers will wonder how the natives obtain lime from mussel-shells. The process is as simple as it is effective. They prepare a stack of dry bamboos. Bamboo is chosen because, while giving a very great heat, it burns clearly, quickly, and leaves very little ash. Upon this stack they heap the shells and then light the fire. When the bamboo is burnt out the shells are roasted. Green banana leaves are then brought on the scene, and in these the shells are wrapped and tied up; then the bundles are placed on live coals, and the steam caused by the action of the hot coals on the green leaves permeates the shells and slakes them. Upon opening the bundles a very fine white lime is found to be the result.

This lime is used with pepper, vine-leaves, and betel-nuts by the natives. They chew the three together. The effect it has upon them is that of a strong stimulant. When they are tired and weary they have a chew of the above mixture, and are quite refreshed.

From *The Wide World Magazine*

The Tiger in the Tunnel

by Ruskin Bond

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand.

There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze. Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up.

Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself, slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him like a

shroud. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before the cutting.

Baldeo was responsible for signalling whether or not the tunnel was clear of obstruction, and his hand-worked signal stood before the entrance. At night it was his duty to see that the lamp was burning, and that the overland mail passed through safely.

"Shall I come too, Father?" asked Tembu sleepily, still lying huddled in a corner of the hut.

"No, it is cold tonight. Do not get up."

Tembu, who was twelve, did not always sleep with his father at the station, for he had also to help in the home, where his mother and small sister were usually alone. They lived in a small tribal village on the outskirts of the forest, about three miles from the station. Their small rice fields did not provide them with more than a bare living, and Baldeo considered himself lucky to have got the job of Khalasi at this small wayside signal-stop.

Still drowsy, Baldeo groped for his lamp in the darkness, then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light, he left the hut, closed the door behind him, and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

Baldeo wondered whether the lamp on the signal-post was still alight. Gathering his shawl closer about him, he stumbled

on, sometimes along the rails, sometimes along the ballast. He longed to get back to his warm corner in the hut.

The eeriness of the place was increased by the neighbouring hills which overhung the main line threateningly. On entering the cutting with its sheer rock walls towering high above the rails, Baldeo could not help thinking about the wild animals he might encounter. He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a man-eater, who was supposed to frequent this spot; but he hardly believed these stories for, since his arrival at this place a month ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger.

There had, of course, been panthers, and only a few days previously the villagers had killed one with their spears and axes. Baldeo had occasionally heard the sawing of a panther calling to its mate, but they had not come near the tunnel or shed.

Baldeo walked confidently for, being a tribal himself, he was used to the jungle and its ways. Like his forefathers, he carried a small axe, fragile to look at, but deadly when in use. With it, in three or four swift strokes, he could cut down a tree as neatly as if it had been sawn; and he prided himself on his skill in wielding it against wild animals. He had killed a young boar with it once, and the family had feasted on the flesh for three days. The axe-head of pure steel, thin but ringing true like a bell, had been made by his father over a charcoal fire. This axe was part of himself, and wherever he went, be it to the local market seven miles away, or to a tribal dance, the axe was always in his hand. Occasionally an official who had come to the

station had offered him good money for the weapon; but Baldeo had no intention of parting with it.

The cutting curved sharply, and in the darkness the black entrance to the tunnel loomed up menacingly. The signal-light was out. Baldeo set to work to haul the lamp down by its chain. If the oil had finished, he would have to return to the hut for more. The mail train was due in five minutes.

Once more he fumbled for his matches. Then suddenly he stood still and listened. The frightened cry of a barking deer, followed by a crashing sound in the undergrowth, made Baldeo hurry. There was still a little oil in the lamp, and after an instant's hesitation he lit the lamp again and hoisted it back into position. Having done this, he walked quickly down the tunnel, swinging his own lamp, so that the shadows leapt up and down the soot-stained walls, and having made sure that the line was clear, he returned to the entrance and sat down to wait for the mail train.

The train was late. Sitting huddled up, almost dozing, he soon forgot his surroundings and began to nod.

Back in the hut, the trembling of the ground told of the approach of the train, and a low, distant rumble woke the boy, who sat up, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"Father, it's time to light the lamp," he mumbled, and then, realising that his father had been gone some time, he lay down again; but he was wide awake now, waiting for the train to pass, waiting for his father's returning footsteps.

A low grunt resounded from the top of the cutting. In a second Baldeo was awake, all his senses alert. Only a tiger could emit such a sound.

There was no shelter for Baldeo, but he grasped his axe firmly and tensed his body, trying to make out the direction from which the animal was approaching. For some time there was only silence, even the usual jungle noises seemed to have ceased altogether. Then a thump and the rattle of small stones announced that the tiger had sprung into the cutting.

Baldeo, listening as he had never listened before, wondered if it was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction—the direction of the hut, in which Tembu would be lying unprotected. He did not have to wonder for long. Before a minute had passed he made out the huge body of the tiger trotting steadily towards him. Its eyes shone a brilliant green in the light from the signal lamp. Flight was useless, for in the dark the tiger would be more sure-footed than Baldeo and would soon be upon him from behind. Baldeo stood with his back to the signal-post, motionless, staring at the great brute moving rapidly towards him. The tiger, used to the ways of men, for it had been preying on them for years, came on fearlessly, and with a quick run and a snarl struck out with its right paw, expecting to bowl over this puny man who dared stand in the way.

Baldeo, however, was ready. With a marvellously agile leap he avoided the paw and brought his axe down on the animal's shoulder. The tiger gave a roar and attempted to close in. Again Baldeo drove his axe with true aim; but, to his horror, the beast swerved, and the axe caught the tiger on the shoulder, almost severing the leg. To make matters worse, the axe remained stuck in the bone, and Baldeo was left without a weapon.

The tiger, roaring with pain, now sprang upon Baldeo, bringing him down and then tearing at his broken body. It was all over in a few minutes. Baldeo was conscious only of a searing pain down his back, and then there was blackness and the night closed in on him for ever.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth, followed by the distant puffing of an engine steadily climbing. The overland mail was approaching. Through the trees beyond the cutting, as the train advanced, the glow of the furnace could be seen; and showers of sparks fell like Diwali lights over the forest.

As the train entered the cutting, the engine whistled once, loud and piercingly. The tiger raised his head, then slowly got to his feet. He found himself trapped like the man. Flight along the cutting was impossible. He entered the tunnel, running as fast as his wounded leg would carry him. And then, with a roar and a shower of sparks, the train entered the yawning tunnel. The noise in the confined space was deafening; but, when the train came out into the open, on the other side, silence returned once more to the forest and the tunnel.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the head-lamps. He received the surprise of his life; for, just above the cow-catcher lay the major portion of the tiger, cut in half by the engine.

There was considerable excitement and conjecture at the station, but back at the cutting there was no sound except for

the sobs of the boy as he sat beside the body of his father. He sat there a long time, unafraid of the darkness, guarding the body from jackals and hyenas, until the first faint light of dawn brought with it the arrival of the relief-watchman.

Tembu and his sister and mother were plunged in grief for two whole days; but life had to go on, and a living had to be made, and all the responsibility now fell on Tembu. Three nights later, he was at the cutting, lighting the signal-lamp for the overland mail.

He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. There was nothing to be afraid of—his father had killed the tiger, the forest gods were pleased; and besides, he had the axe with him, his father's axe, and he knew how to use it.

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The Leopard

by Ruskin Bond

I first saw the leopard when I was crossing the small stream at the bottom of the hill. The ravine was so deep there that for most of the day it remained in shadow. This encouraged many birds and animals to emerge from cover even during the hours of daylight. Few people ever passed that way: only milkmen and charcoal-burners from the surrounding villages. As a result, the ravine had become a little haven of wild life, one of the few natural sanctuaries left in the area.

Nearly every morning, and sometimes during the day, I heard the cry of the barking-deer. In the evening, walking through the forest, I disturbed parties of kaleej pheasant, who went gliding down the ravine on open, motionless wings. I saw

pine-martens and a handsome red fox. I recognised the footprints of a bear.

As I had not come to take anything from the jungle, the birds and animals soon “grew accustomed to my face”, as Mr. Higgins would say. More likely, they recognised my footfalls. My approach did not disturb them. A Spotted Forktail, which at first used to fly away, now remained perched on a boulder in the middle of the stream while I got across by means of other boulders only a few yards away. Its mellow call followed me up the hillside.

The langurs in the oak and rhododendron trees, who would at first go leaping through the branches at my approach, now watched me with some curiosity as they munched the tender green shoots of the oak. But one evening, as I passed, I heard them chattering with excitement; and I knew I was not the cause of the disturbance.

As I crossed the stream and began climbing the hill, the grunting and chattering increased, as though the langurs were trying to warn me of some hidden danger. I looked up, and saw a great orange-gold leopard, sleek and spotted, poised on a rock about twenty feet away from me. The leopard looked at me once, briefly and with an air of disdain, and then sprang into a dense thicket, making absolutely no sound as he melted into the shadows.

I had disturbed the leopard in his quest for food. But a little later I heard the quickening cry of a barking-deer as it fled through the forest.

After that encounter I did not see the leopard again, although I was often made aware of his presence by certain movements.

Sometimes I thought I was being followed; and once, when I was late getting home and darkness closed in on the forest, I saw two bright eyes staring at me from a thicket. I stood still, my heart thudding against my ribs. Then the eyes danced away, and I realised that they were only fireflies.

One evening, near the stream, I found the remains of a barking-deer which had only been partly eaten. I wondered why the leopard had not hidden the remains of his meal, and decided that he had been disturbed while eating. Climbing the hill, I met a party of shikaris resting beneath the pine trees. They asked me if I had seen a leopard. I said I had not. They said they knew there was a leopard in the forest. Leopard-skins were selling in Delhi at a thousand rupees each, they told me. I walked on.

But the hunters had seen the carcass of the deer, and they had seen the leopard's pug-marks, and they had kept coming to the forest. Almost every evening I heard their guns banging away.

"There's a leopard about," they always told me. "You should carry a gun."

"I don't have one," I said.

The birds were seldom to be seen, and even the langurs had moved on. The red fox did not show itself; and the pine-martens, who had become quite bold, now dashed into hiding

at my approach. The smell of one human is like the smell of any other.

And then, of course, the inevitable happened.

The men were coming up the hill, shouting and singing. They had a long bamboo pole across their shoulders, and slung from the pole, feet up, head down, was the lifeless body of the leopard. He had been shot in the neck and in the head.

"We told you there was a leopard!" they shouted, in great good humour. "Isn't he a fine specimen?"

"He was a fine leopard," I said.

I walked home through the silent forest. It was very silent, almost as though the birds and animals knew that their trust had been violated.

'And God gave Man dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ...'

For a leopard-skin coat, value one thousand rupees.

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The Regimental Myna

by Ruskin Bond

In my grandfather's time, British soldiers stationed in India were very fond of keeping pets, and there were very few barrack-rooms where pets were not to be found. Dogs and cats were the most common, but birds were also great favourites.

In one instance, a bird was not only the pet of a barrack-room but of a whole regiment. His owner was my grandfather, Private Bond, a soldier of the line, who had come out to India with the King's Own Scottish Rifles.

The bird was a myna, common enough in India, and Grandfather named it Dickens after his favourite author. Dickens came into Grandfather's possession when quite young, and he was soon a favourite with all the men in the barracks at Meerut,

where the regiment was stationed. Meerut was hot and dusty; the curries were hot and spicy; the General in command was hot-tempered and crusty. Keeping a pet was almost the sole recreation for the men in barracks.

Because he was tamed so young, Dickens (or Dicky for short) never learned to pick up food for himself. Instead, just like a baby bird, he took his meals from Grandfather's mouth. And other men used to feed him in the same way. When Dickens was hungry, he asked for food by sitting on Grandfather's shoulders, flapping his wings rapidly, and opening his beak.

Dicky was never caged, and as soon as he was able to fly he attended all parades, watched the rations being issued, and was present on every occasion which brought the soldiers out of their barracks. When out in the country, he would follow the regiment or party, flying from shoulder to shoulder, or from tree to tree, always keeping a sharp look-out for his enemies, the hawks.

Sometimes he would choose a mounted officer as a companion; but after the manoeuvres were over he would return to Grandfather's shoulder.

One day there was to be a General's inspection, and the Colonel gave orders that Dicky was to be confined, so that he wouldn't appear on parade.

"Lock him away somewhere, Bond," the Colonel snapped. "We can't have him flapping all over the parade-ground."

Dickens was put into a storeroom, with the windows closed and the door locked. But while the General's inspection was

going on, the mess orderly, who wanted something from the storeroom and knew where to find the key, opened the door.

Out flew Dickens. He made straight for the parade-ground, greatly excited at being late and chattering loudly.

Dicky must have thought the General had something to do with his detention, or else he may have felt an explanation was due to him. Whatever his reasoning, he chose to alight on the General's pith helmet, between the plumes.

Here he chattered faster than ever, much to the surprise of the General, who was obliged to take his helmet off before he could dislodge the bird.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed the General, going purple in the face—for Dicky had discharged his breakfast between the plumes of the helmet.

Meanwhile, Dicky had flown to the Colonel's shoulder to make further complaints, to the great delight of the men.

"Fall out, Bond!" the Colonel screamed. "Take this bird away—for good! I don't want to see it again!"

A crestfallen Private Bond returned to barracks with Dicky, wondering what to do next. To part with Dicky, or even to cage him, was out of the question.

But Grandfather was not the only one who loved Dickens. He was also highly popular with the entire battalion. In the end, Grandfather decided to ask his Captain to bring him before the Colonel so he could ask forgiveness for Dicky's behaviour.

The Colonel gave Private Bond and his Captain a patient hearing. Then the Colonel consulted his officers and decided

that the bird could stay—provided he was taken on as a serving member of the regiment!

Dickens's popularity was not surprising, as he was highly intelligent. He knew the men of his own regiment from those of others, and would only associate with Scottish Rifles. Even in the drill season, when there were as many as twenty regiments in camp, Dicky never made a mistake.

Dickens had a unique method of getting from one part of the camp to another. Instead of flying over the top of the camp, he would go in stages from tent to tent, flying very low, sheltering in each one, then peeping out and looking carefully for hawks before moving on to the next.

One day Grandfather was admitted to hospital with malaria. Dicky couldn't find him anywhere, and searched and searched all over the camp in great distress. The hospital was a couple of kilometres from the barracks, and it wasn't until the third day of searching that Dickens finally discovered Grandfather lying there.

From then on, for as long as Grandfather was on the sick list, Dicky spent his time at the hospital. An upturned helmet was placed on a shelf for him near grandfather's bed, and Dickens spent the night inside it. As soon as Grandfather was discharged from the hospital, Dickens left as well, and never returned, not even for a visit.

In 1888, the regiment got orders to proceed to Calcutta, *en route* for Burma, where it was to take part in the Chin Lushai Expedition. All pets had to be left behind, and Dickens was no exception.

But Dicky had his own views on the subject.

The regiment travelled in stages, marching along the Grand Trunk Road, moving at night and going into rest camps for the day.

Dickens caught up on the third day. He arrived in camp after a journey of more than three hundred kilometres—dull, dejected and starving, as he still depended on being fed from Grandfather's mouth.

Route-marching and travelling by train (the railway was just beginning to spread across India), the battalion finally reached Calcutta. From there, contrary to orders, Dickens embarked for Burma along with the soldiers.

On board ship, Dickens would amuse himself by peeping from the portholes, and flapping from one to the other. He would also go up on deck, and sometimes even took experimental flights out to sea. But one day he was caught in a gale and had such difficulty getting back to the ship that he gave up that kind of adventuring.

Dickens stayed with his regiment all through the expedition and the campaign. Many of his soldier friends lost their lives, but Grandfather and Dickens survived the fighting and returned safely to Calcutta.

Grandfather, now a Corporal, was given six months' home leave, along with the rest of the regiment. This meant sailing home to England.

During the first part of the voyage, Dicky was his usual cheerful self. But when the ship left the Suez Canal, the weather

grew cold, and he was no longer to be seen on the yardarms or on the bridge with the captain. He even lost interest in going on deck with Grandfather, preferring to stay with the parrots on the waste deck.

After the ship passed Gibraltar, Dickens went below. He never came on deck again.

Dickens was laid out in a Huntley and Palmer's biscuit tin, and buried at sea. Not, perhaps, with full military honours, but certainly to the sound of Grandfather's bagpipes, playing "The Last Post".

The Moose And Rusty Jones

by Charles D. Roberts

Not within the memory of the oldest settlers had there been a winter so severe. All the country about the Ottanoonsis and Quahdavic waters was buried under an unprecedented depth of snow. Never before, it was said, had such implacable cold fixed its grip upon the land. Storm piled upon the heels of bitter storm till landmarks were all but blotted out, and the little, lonely backwoods cabins were smothered to the eaves. The scattered settlers gave up, before mid-winter had passed, all effort to keep their road open, and all their necessary travelling was done on snowshoes, tramping their trails seven, eight, nine, or ten feet above the hidden ground. The little trees were submerged from sight, forgotten.

The taller spruce and fir towered in snowy domes and pinnacles, except where a rough wind had shaken their branches free of the intolerable burden, and left them standing sharply dark against the wide white desolation.

For the wild creatures of the forest it was a prolonged tragedy, except for those which were so fortunate as to be hibernating, sleeping away the bitter time in their deep holes beneath the snow where the fiercest cold could not touch them. Among the chief sufferers were the moose. These heavy animals, accustomed to select a sheltered spot in the woods for their winter home, and tramp out a maze of narrow pathways all about it leading to the thickets of young birch, poplar, and striped maple, whose twigs furnished them their food, early found it difficult to keep their paths open. As the winter progressed, they browsed away all the edible twigs and even the coarser branches of the thickets in their immediate neighbourhood. These consumed, they could only reach further supplies, and these all too scanty, by long and painful flounderings through the smothering depths of the snow. Some of these imprisoned moose families succeeded in getting enough forage to keep them alive, if barely. Others, less fortunately situated, slowly starved to death.

And so that winter wore grimly on towards the late release of spring.

At Brine's Corners, outside Smith's Store—which was also the settlement Post Office—young Rusty Jones, so called from the colour of his bristling shock head, was roping parcels, and

an oat-bag, a big stone-ware molasses jug, and a kerosene oil tin, securely upon his toboggan. This done to his satisfaction, he pulled on his thick blue home-knit mittens, slipped his moccasined feet into the moosehide thongs of his snowshoes, waved farewell to the little group of loungers in the store, and set out on his four-mile tramp over the buried road to the farm. It was late, already just on sundown—an hour later than he had expected to be. He had waited to get the mail—for there was a story running in the weekly paper (last week's issue) which he was eager to get on with. Now, he thought of all the chores awaiting him at home, after supper, which would have to be cleared up before he could get to his reading.

Half a mile down the road a new idea came to him. By striking away from the road, across the valley, on his left, he could save nearly a mile. In ordinary seasons this would have meant no saving, the intervening country being an almost impassable tangle of swamps and deadfalls and dense undergrowth. But now, he reflected, it would be as easy travelling as by the road. Silly of him not to have thought of it before! Dragging the loaded toboggan easily behind him, he struck off at a long, loping stride through the forest. Boy though he was, he knew that his woodsman's sense of direction and his familiarity with the lay of the land would guide him straight to his destination.

Threading his way through the silent corridors of towering spruce and hemlock, skirting the dense groups of tall, slim white birches, avoiding the snowy swells and mounds which

meant, to his experienced eyes, traps for his snowshoes, Rusty Jones struck on across the valley till he was within less than a mile of his father's lonely little farm. Then, in the cold, blue-grey, ghostly twilight, he checked himself on the brink of a deep hollow in the snow, half overshadowed by a spreading hemlock, and found himself peering down upon a huddled group of moose. He had never imagined there were any moose within a dozen miles of him. Yet here, in the tangled recesses of the valley, a little moose family had chosen to "yard up" for the winter.

In the gloom of the trodden and littered hollow he made out their forms—a gigantic greyish-brown bull, a dark, smallish cow, and two yearling calves. They were all lying down; but one of the calves, stretched awkwardly on its side, was obviously dead and frozen stiff. The others were all staring up at him with pathetic, hopeless eyes, as if too despairing for fear. But presently the great bull staggered to his feet and stood in threatening attitude, ready to defend his charges to the last, even against the most terrible of all enemies, Man. Rusty Jones perceived that he was piteously emaciated, the shaggy hide drooping in creases on his flanks. Rusty's kind grey eyes clouded with sympathy. "Gee," he muttered, 'poor beggars, they're starving, that's what they are!'

He dropped the rope of his toboggan and started off on a run up the slope, remembering a thicket of birch saplings which he had passed a few hundred yards back. Here, with the aid of the long sheath-knife which he carried at his belt, he

gathered an armful of the aromatic branches, the favourite forage of the moose.

When he threw his burden down into the hollow the great bull grunted eagerly, the cow and calf got to their feet as if new life already flowed in their veins, and all three fell hungrily to the feast. Rusty hastened to fetch them another armful.

"There," he panted, picking up his toboggan rope once more, "I guess that'll do yous fer to-night. I'll bring yous some good hay to-morrow mornin'."

When the boy got home, very late, with his story, he found his father and mother sympathetic enough in regard to the cause of his lateness, but adamant as to his promise of the hay.

"We hain't got more'n enough hay to see our own critters through," said his mother, decidedly. "But maybe father'll let you take some straw. Plenty good enough for them kind."

Bob Jones, a huge, lean backwoodsman, known throughout the settlements, for obvious reasons, as "Red Bob," laughed good-humouredly.

"Reckon ye'll hev to chop birch an' poplar for 'em, Rusty," said he. "That's their natural fodder, anyways. But ye're goin' to hev yer work cut out for yeh if ye're going to feed all the starvin' critters in the woods *this* winter."

"That's all right," said Rusty, cheerfully, helping himself liberally to molasses on his pile of hot buckwheat pancakes. "I'll take 'em a bundle o' straw in the mornin', an' after that I'll chop for 'em. Don't worry. I'll see 'em through, all right. If you two had *seen* how pitiful them poor beasts looked, you'd feel

jest as I do about it. But of course you're right about the hay. We *hain't* got none too much for ourselves."

Thereafter, for the next few weeks, regularly every other day would Rusty Jones betake himself to the hollow under the hemlock, axe in hand and dragging his toboggan, and leave for his sombre protégés a two days' supply of the twigs and branches which they loved. He found that they preferred this rough fodder to the best cat straw, and even to the few wisps of choice timothy hay which he once brought them as an experiment. By his third visit the bull and the leggy yearling had become so tame that they would come up and snatch the fodder from his hand with their long, prehensile muzzles. The dark cow, of a suspicious and jealous disposition, was slower to be won; but when won, showed herself more greedy and familiar than the others, pushing them rudely aside to try and get more than her share of the titbit which Rusty took to bringing them in his capacious pockets. Being something of a naturalist, and a keen reader of all the nature stories he could get hold of, Rusty liked to experiment on the tastes of the moose. He found that they liked bread, the staler and harder the better—and corn-cake—and even soggy, cold buckwheat pancakes; while the most tempting gingerbread was scornfully rejected. Sugar they would have none of, but salt they licked up enthusiastically, following him around for more. He tried them with a handful of grain—oats—on a tin plate; but the bull, after an inquiring sniff, blew into the plate a great, gusty breath from his wide nostrils, and the oats flew in every direction. Oats were scarce

and precious, so Rusty did not try that experiment again. But the oats were not wasted; for a pair of saucy, smartly feathered "Whiskey Jacks," or Canada jays—known to Rusty as "Moose-birds"—who frequented the moose-yard, lost no time in picking them up, to the very last grain. Nothing was small enough to escape their bright, confiding, impudent eyes.

Meanwhile the body of the dead calf, rigid and pathetic, had lain ignored in the very centre of the hollow. At last Rusty took notice of it, and decided that it was a blot upon the kindly scene. He decided to get rid of it. Seizing it by the rigid hind legs he started to drag it to the side of the yard, intending to hoist it up over the edge. But the cow, seeming suddenly to remember that this dead thing had been her calf, ran at him with an angry grunt. Startled and indignant, Rusty struck her a sharp blow across the muzzle, and shouted at her with that voice of assured authority which he used with the yoke of oxen on the farm. The stupid cow drew back, puzzled both by the blow and the shout. To add to her bewilderment the sagacious old bull, who had become as devoted to Rusty as a faithful dog, lunged at her so fiercely with his massive, unantlered head that she went sprawling half-way across the hollow. And there she stood, wagging her long ears in puzzled discomfiture, while Rusty laboriously hoisted the awkward weight and pushed it forth upon the upper level of the snow. This accomplished, he dragged it a few yards away and left it behind a white-domed bush, where it would no longer offend his vision. Then he went down again into the hollow and stroked the big bull's muzzle,

and scratched his ears, and talked to him, and finally gave him a generous portion of salt as a reward for his fidelity. The calf crowded up appealingly and was granted a small lump; and then the cow, forgetting her resentment, came nosing in to claim her share. But Rusty, still indignant at her, would only allow her to lick the last grain or two from his palm.

"That'll larn yeh," said he severely, "not to be gittin' so fresh."

On Rusty's next visit to the moose-yard, two days later, he was at first surprised to observe the numerous tracks of wild creatures on the surrounding snow. The neat footprints of foxes predominated, and the slender trails of the weasels. But there were also, standing out conspicuously, the broad, spreading pad-marks of a big lynx. Rusty examined them all intently for a few moments, then stepped round behind the shrouded bush to look at the body of the dead calf. The news of a banquet had spread swiftly among the hungry wild folk, and the carcass was half gnawed away. He scratched his red head thoughtfully, and peered about him to see if he could catch sight of any of the banqueters. Some thirty or forty paces away the tops of a buried spruce sapling had been jarred clear of its swathing and stood out sharply against the whiteness. He eyed it piercingly, understandingly—and presently, through the thick green, made out the form of a red fox, crouching motionless.

In a few seconds the fox, perceiving that he was detected, stood up, and stared Rusty in the eyes with a fine assumption of unconcern. He yawned, scratched his ear with his hind paw, flicked his splendid, tawny brush, and trotted away with elaborate

deliberation, as much as to say "That, for you!" till he had gained cover. Rusty, who knew foxes, could picture the furry humbug throwing dignity to the winds and running for dear life as soon as he felt himself out of sight.

"Gee," he muttered, "that red beggar's got a fine pelt on him!" He wondered how many dollars it would be worth. He called to mind also those tracks of the big lynx, and wondered what a lynx pelt would fetch. He thought what a scheme it would be to set traps around the dead calf. But this plan he threw overboard promptly with a grunt of distaste. He had always detested the idea of trapping. Then he thought of his gun—which he used chiefly against the marauding hawks when they came after his chickens.

"Easy enough to get a shot at that red varmin, he's so darn bold an' sassy," he mused, still dwelling on the price of that fine pelt. Then his thoughts turned to the owner of the pelt. He had rather liked the audacious insolence of the creature—such a brave piece of camouflage in the face of the enemy!

"After all," he murmured to himself, "I guess I won't bother. It don't seem quite fair, when they're all so starved, an' I've tricked 'em all into comin' round here by puttin' out that there carcass. I better let 'em all have a good time while it lasts. An' besides, if I fired a gun here now it would scare my moose out o' their senses."

Having come to this decision he turned back to the mooseyard, thinking with a deprecating grin: "But *what* a blame fool father would call me, if he knew! An' maybe he'd be right!"

At last, at long last, the grip of that inexorable winter loosened suddenly, and fell away. As the snow shrank, assailed above by warm rains and ardent suns, mysteriously undermined beneath, the tangled undergrowth began to emerge, black and sodden, from its hiding, and the valley became more difficult to traverse. The moose were soon able to forage for themselves, and Rusty's visits to the hollow under the hemlock grew more and more infrequent. They were no longer needed, indeed; but he had become so attached to his charges, and to the sagacious old bull in particular, that he hated to let them slip quite out of his life. It had to be, however; and in this fashion, finally, came it about.

One morning, after an arduous struggle, he arrived, wet and exasperated, at the hollow under the hemlock, to find that the cow and the yearling had gone. But there, all expectant, was the faithful bull, who knew that this was Rusty's usual hour of coming. Rusty had his pockets filled with dry corn-cake and salt, and these the bull devoured appreciatively, stopping now and then to nuzzle the boy lovingly with his long, sensitive upper lip. At last, with a shamefaced grin, Rusty flung his arms about the great animal's neck, and murmured: "Goodbye, you old beggar. Take care o' yerself, an' keep out o' the way o' the hunters when next Fall comes 'round. Gee, what a pair o' horns you must have on that big head o' yourn!"

He turned away rather hurriedly, and started homeward on a longer but less obstructed route than that by which he had come.

He had not gone many paces, however, when he was startled to feel a long muzzle thrust over his shoulder, gently brushing his neck. Noiselessly as a cat the bull had followed him. Deeply touched, but somewhat embarrassed to know what to do with him, Rusty fondled the devoted beast affectionately, and continued his journey. The bull accompanied him right up to the edge of the open, in full view of the farmyard. The farmer was lowering his bucket into the well, and the sharp clanking of the chain rang on the still spring air. The big black and white farm-dog, barking loudly, came capering down the slope to greet Rusty. The bull halted, waving his long ears.

"Better quit now!" said Rusty. "Good-bye, an' take keer o' yerself!"

Not allowing himself to look round he trotted forward to meet the noisy dog; and the gaunt, dark form of the great moose faded back, soundlessly as a shadow, into the trees.

From *Wisdom of the Wilderness*, circa 1900

Mustela of the Lone Hand

by C.G.D. Roberts

It was in the very heart of the ancient wood, the forest primeval of the North, gloomy with the dark green, crowded ranks of fir and spruce and hemlock, and tangled with the huge windfalls of countless storm-torn winters. But now, at high noon of the glowing Northern summer, the gloom was pierced to its depths with shafts of radiant sun; the barred and chequered transparent brown shadows hummed with dancing flies; the warm air was alive with the small, thin notes of chickadee and nuthatch; varied now and then by the impertinent scolding of the Canada jay; and the drowsing tree-tops steamed up an incense of balsamy fragrance in the heat. The ancient wilderness dreamed, stretched itself all

open to the sun, and seemed to sigh with immeasurable content.

High up in the grey trunk of a half-dead forest giant was a round hole, the entrance to what had been the nest of a pair of big, red-headed, golden-winged woodpeckers, or "yellow-hammers." The big woodpeckers had long since been dispossessed—the female, probably, caught and devoured, with her eggs, upon the nest. The dispossessor, and present tenant, was Mustela.

Framed in the blackness of the round hole was a sharp-muzzled, triangular, golden-brown face with high, pointed ears, looking out upon the world below with keen eyes in which a savage wildness and an alert curiosity were incongruously mingled. Nothing that went on upon the dim ground far below, among the tangled trunks and windfalls, or in the sun-drenched tree-tops, escaped that restless and piercing gaze. But Mustela had well fed, and felt lazy, and this hour of noon was not his hunting hour; so the most unsuspecting red squirrel, gathering cones in a neighbouring pine, was insufficient to lure him from his rest, and the plumpest hare, waving its long, suspicious ears down among the ground shadows, only made him lick his thin lips and think what he would do later on in the afternoon, when he felt like it.

Presently, however, a figure came into view at sight of which Mustela's expression changed. His thin black lips wrinkled back in a soundless snarl, displaying the full length of his long, snow-white, deadly-sharp canines, and a red spark of hate smouldered in his bright eyes. But no less than his hate was

his curiosity—a curiosity which is the most dangerous weakness of all Mustela's tribe. Mustela's pointed head stretched itself clear of the hole, in order to get a better look at the man who was passing below his tree.

A man was a rare sight in that remote and inaccessible section of the Northern wilderness. This particular man—a woodsman, a "timber-cruiser," seeking out new and profitable areas for the work of the lumbermen—wore a flaming red-and-orange handkerchief loosely knotted about his brawny neck, and carried over his shoulder an axe whose bright blade flashed sharply whenever a ray of sunlight struck it. It was this flashing axe, and the blazing colour of the scarlet-and-orange kerchief, that excited Mustela's curiosity—so excited it, indeed, that he came clean out of the hole and circled the great trunk, clinging close and wide-legged like a squirrel, in order to keep the woodsman in view as he passed by.

Engrossed though he was in the interesting figure of the man, Mustela's vigilance was still unsleeping. His amazingly quick ears at this moment caught a hushed hissing of wings in the air above his head. He did not stop to look up and investigate. Like a streak of ruddy light he flashed around the trunk and whisked back into his hole, and just as he vanished a magnificent long-winged goshawk, the king of all the falcons, swooping down from the blue, struck savagely with his clutching talons at the edges of the hole.

The quickness of Mustela was miraculous. Moreover, he was not content with escape. He wanted vengeance. Even in his

lightning dive into his refuge he had managed to turn about, doubling on himself like an eel. And now, as those terrible talons gripped and clung for half a second to the edge of the hole, he snapped his teeth securely into the last joint of the longest talon and dragged it an inch or two in.

With a yelp of fury and surprise, the great falcon strove to lift himself into the air, pounding madly with his splendid wings and twisting himself about, and thrusting mightily with his free foot against the side of the hole. But he found himself held fast, as in a trap. Sagging back with all his weight, Mustela braced himself securely with all four feet and hung on, his whipcord sinews set like steel. He knew that if he let go for an instant, to secure a better mouthful, his enemy would escape; so he just worried and chewed at the joint, satisfied with the punishment he was inflicting.

Meanwhile the woodsman, his attention drawn by that one sudden yelp of the falcon and by the prolonged and violent buffeting of wings, had turned back to see what was going on. Pausing at the foot of Mustela's tree, he peered upwards with narrowed eyes. A slow smile wrinkled his weather-beaten face. He did not like hawks. For a moment or two he stood wondering what it was in the hole that could hold so powerful a bird. Whatever it was, he stood for it.

Being a dead shot with the revolver, he seldom troubled to carry a rifle in his "cruisings." Drawing his long-barrelled "Smith and Wesson" from his belt, he took careful aim and fired. At the sound of the shot, the thing in the hole was

startled and let go; and the great bird, turning once over slowly in the air, dropped to his feet with a feathery thud, its talons still contracting shudderingly. The woodsman glanced up, and there, framed in the dark of the hole, was the little yellow face of Mustela, insatiably curious, snarling down upon him viciously.

"Gee," muttered the woodsman, "I might hev' knowed it was one o' them pesky martens! Nobody else o' *that* size 'd hev the gall to tackle a duck-hawk!"

Now, the fur of Mustela, the pine-marten or American sable, is a fur of price; but the woodsman—subject, like most of his kind, to unexpected attacks of sentiment and imagination—felt that to shoot the defiant little fighter would be like an act of treachery to an ally.

"Ye're a pretty fighter, sonny," said he, with a whimsical grin, "an' ye may keep that yaller pelt o' yourn, for all o' me!"

Then he picked up the dead falcon, tied its claws together, slung it upon his axe, and strode off through the trees. He wanted to keep those splendid wings as a present for his girl in at the Settlements.

Highly satisfied with his victory over the mighty falcon—for which he took the full credit to himself—Mustela now retired to the bottom of his comfortable, moss-lined nest and curled himself up to sleep away the heat of the day. As the heat grew sultrier and drowsier through the still hours of early afternoon, there fell upon the forest a heavy silence, deepened rather than broken by the faint hum of the heat-loving flies. And the spicy

scents of pine and spruce and tamarack steamed forth richly upon the moveless air.

When the shadows of the trunks began to lengthen, Mustela woke up, and he woke up hungry. Slipping out of his hole, he ran a little way down the trunk and then leapt, lightly and nimbly as a squirrel, into the branches of a big hemlock which grew close to his own tree. Here, in a crotch from which he commanded a good view beneath the foliage, he halted and stood motionless, peering about him for some sign of a likely quarry.

Poised thus, tense, erect and vigilant, Mustela was a picture of beauty swift and fierce. In colour he was of a rich golden brown, with a patch of brilliant yellow covering throat and chest. His tail was long and bushy, to serve him as a balance in his long, squirrel-like leaps from tree to tree. His pointed ears were large and alert, to catch all the faint, elusive forest sounds. In length, being a specially fine specimen of his kind, he was perhaps a couple of inches over two feet. His body had all the lithe grace of a weasel, with something of the strength of his great-cousin and most dreaded foe, the fisher.

For a time nothing stirred. Then from a distance came, faint but shrill, the *chirr-r-r-r* of a red squirrel. Mustela's discriminating ear located the sound at once. All energy on the instant, he darted towards it, springing from branch to branch with amazing speed and noiselessness.

The squirrel, noisy and imprudent after the manner of his tribe, was chattering fussily and bouncing about on his branch,

excited over something best known to himself, when a darting, gold-brown shape of doom landed upon the other end of the branch, not half a dozen feet from him. With a screech of warning and terror, he bounded into the air, alighted on the trunk, and raced up it, with Mustela close upon his heels. Swift as he was—and everyone who has seen a red squirrel in a hurry knows how he can move—Mustela was swifter, and in about five seconds the little chatterer's fate would have been sealed. But he knew what he was about. This was his own tree. Had it been otherwise, he would have sprung into another, and directed his desperate flight over the slenderest branches, where his enemy's greater weight would be a hindrance. As it was, he managed to gain his hole—just in time—and all that Mustela got was a little mouthful of fur from the tip of that vanishing red tail.

Very angry and disappointed, and hissing like a cat, Mustela jammed his savage face into the hole. He could see the squirrel crouched, with pounding heart and panic-stricken eyes, a few inches below him, just out of his reach. The hole was too small to admit his head. In a rage he tore at the edges with his powerful claws, but the wood was too hard for him to make any impression on it, and after half a minute of futile scratching, he gave up in disgust and raced off down the tree. A moment later the squirrel poked his head out and shrieked an effectual warning to every creature within earshot.

With that loud alarm shrilling in his ears. Mustela knew there would be no successful hunting for him till he could put himself beyond the range of it. He raced on, therefore, abashed

by his failure, till the taunting sound faded in the distance. Then his bushy brown brush went up in the air again, and his wonted look of insolent self-confidence returned. As it did not seem to be his lucky day for squirrels, he descended to earth and began quartering the ground for the fresh trail of a rabbit.

In that section of the forest where Mustela now found himself, the dark and scented tangle of spruce and balsam-fir was broken by thickets of stony barren, clothed unevenly by thickets of stunted white birch, and silver-leaved quaking aspen, and wild sumach with its massive tufts of acrid, dark-crimson bloom. Here the rabbit trails were abundant, and Mustela was not long in finding one fresh enough to offer him the prospect of a speedy kill. Swiftly and silently, nose to earth, he set himself to follow its intricate and apparently aimless windings, sure that he would come upon a rabbit at the end of it.

As it chanced, however, he never came to the end of that particular trail or set his teeth in the throat of that particular rabbit. In gliding past a bushy young fir-tree, he happened to glance beneath it, and marked another of his tribe tearing the feathers from a new-slain grouse. The stranger was smaller and slighter than himself—a young female—quite possibly, indeed, his mate of a few months earlier in the season. Such considerations were less than nothing to Mustela, whose ferocious spirit knew neither gallantry, chivalry, nor mercy. With what seemed a single flashing leap he was upon her—or *almost*, for the slim female was no longer there. She had bounded away as lightly and instantaneously as if blown by the wind of

his coming. She knew Mustela, and she knew it would be death to stay and do battle for her kill. Spitting with rage and fear, she fled from the spot, terrified lest he should pursue her and find the nest where her six precious kittens were concealed.

But Mustela was too hungry to be interested just then in mere slaughter for its own sake. He was feeling serious and practical. The grouse was a full-grown cock, plump and juicy, and when Mustela had devoured it his appetite was sated. But not so his blood-lust. After a hasty toilet he set out again, looking for something to kill.

Crossing the belt of rocky ground, he emerged upon a flat tract of treeless barren covered with a dense growth of blueberry bushes about a foot in height. The bushes at this season were loaded with ripe fruit of a bright blue colour, and squatting among them was a big black bear, enjoying the banquet at his ease. Gathering the berries together wholesale with his great furry paws, he was cramming them into his mouth greedily, with little grunts and gurgles of delight, and the juicy fragments with which his snout and jaws were smeared gave his formidable face an absurdly childish look. To Mustela—when that insolent little animal flashed before him—he vouchsafed no more than a glance of good-natured contempt. For the rank and stringy flesh of a pine-marten he had no use at any time of year, least of all in the season when the blueberries were ripe.

Mustela, however, was too discreet to pass within reach of one of those huge but nimble paws, lest the happy bear should grow playful under the stimulus of the blueberry juice. He

turned aside to a judicious distance, and there, sitting up on his hindquarters like a rabbit, he proceeded to nibble, rather superciliously, a few of the choicest berries. He was not enthusiastic over vegetable food, but, just as a cat will now and then eat grass, he liked at times a little corrective to his unvarying diet of flesh.

Having soon had enough of the blueberry patch, Mustela left it to the bear and turned back toward the deep of the forest, where he felt most at home. He went stealthily, following up the wind in order that his scent might not give warning of his approach. It was getting near sunset by this time, and floods of pinky gold, washing across the open barrens, poured in along the ancient corridors of the forest, touching the sombre trunks with stains of tenderest rose. In this glowing colour Mustela, with his ruddy fur, moved almost invisible.

And, so moving, he came plump upon a big buck-rabbit squatting half asleep in the centre of a clump of pale green fern.

The rabbit hounded straight into the air, his big, childish eyes popping from his head with horror. Mustela's leap was equally instantaneous, and it was unerring. He struck his victim in mid-air, and his fangs met deep in the rabbit's throat. With a scream the rabbit fell backwards and came down with a muffled thump upon the ferns, with Mustela on top of him. There was a brief, thrashing struggle, and then Mustela, his forepaws upon the breast of his still quivering prey—several times larger and heavier than himself—lifted his blood-stained face and stared about him savagely, as if defying all the other

prowlers of the forest to come and try to rob him of his prize.

Having eaten his fill, Mustela dragged the remnants of the carcass under a thick bush, defiled it so as to make it distasteful to other eaters of flesh, and scratched a lot of dead leaves and twigs over it till it was effectually hidden. As game was abundant at this season, and as he always preferred a fresh kill, he was not likely to want any more of that victim, but he hated the thought of any rival getting a profit from his prowess.

Mustela now turned his steps homeward, travelling more lazily, but with eyes, nose and ears ever on the alert for fresh quarry. Though his appetite was sated for some hours, he was as eager as ever for the hunt, for the fierce joy of the killing and the taste of the hot blood. But the Unseen Powers of the wilderness, ironic and impartial, decided just then that it was time for Mustela to be hunted in his turn.

If there was one creature above all others who could strike the fear of death into Mustela's merciless soul, it was his great-cousin, the ferocious and implacable fisher. Of twice his weight and thrice his strength, and his full peer in swiftness and cunning, the fisher was Mustela's nightmare, from whom there was no escape unless in the depths of some hole too narrow for the fisher's powerful shoulders to get into. And at this moment there was the fisher's grinning, black-muzzled mask crouched in the path before him, eyeing him with the sneer of certain triumph.

Mustela's heart jumped into his throat as he flashed about and fled for his life—straight away, alas, from his safe hole in

the tree-top—and with the lightning dart of a striking rattler the fisher was after him.

Mustela had a start of perhaps twenty paces, and for a time he held his own. He dared no tricks, lest he should lose ground, for he knew his foe was as swift and as cunning as himself. But he knew himself stronger and more enduring than most of his tribe, and therefore he put his hope, for the most part, in his endurance. Moreover, there was always a chance that he might come upon some hole or crevice too narrow for his pursuer. Indeed, to a tough and indomitable spirit like Mustela's, until his enemy's fangs should finally lock themselves in his throat, there would always seem to be a chance. One never could know which way the freakish Fates of the wilderness would cast their favour. On and on he raced, therefore, tearing up or down the long, sloping trunks of ancient windfalls, twisting like a golden snake through tangled thickets, springing in great airy leaps from trunk to rock, from rock to overhanging branch, in silence; and ever at his heels followed the relentless, grinning shape of his pursuer, gaining a little in the long leaps, but losing a little in the denser thickets, and so just about keeping his distance.

For all Mustela's endurance, the end of that race, in all probability, would have been for him but one swift, screeching fight, and then the dark. But at this juncture the Fates woke up, peered ironically through the grey and ancient mosses of their hair, and remembered some grudge against the fisher.

A moment later Mustela, just launching himself on a desperate leap, beheld in his path a huge hornets nest suspended

from a branch near the ground. Well he knew, and respected, that terrible insect, the great black hornet with the cream-white stripes about his body. But it was too late to turn aside. He crashed against the grey, papery sphere, tearing it from its cables, and flashed on, with half a dozen white-hot stings in his hindquarters prodding him to a fresh burst of speed. Swerving slightly, he dashed through a dense thicket of juniper scrub, hoping not only to scrape his fiery tormentors off, but at the same time to gain a little on his big pursuer.

The fisher was at this stage not more than a dozen paces in the rear. He arrived, to his undoing, just as the outraged hornets poured out in a furiously humming swarm from their overturned nest. It was clear enough to them that the fisher was their assailant. With deadly unanimity they pouched upon him.

With a startled screech the fisher bounced aside and plunged for shelter. But he was too late. The great hornets were all over him. His ears and nostrils were black with them, his long fur was full of them, and his eyes, shut tight, were already a flaming anguish with the corroding poison of their stings. Frantically he burrowed his face down into the moss and through into the moist earth, and madly he clawed at his ears, crushing scores of his tormentors. But he could not crush out the venom which their long stings had injected. Finding it hopeless to free himself from their swarms, he tore madly through the underbrush, but blindly, crashing into trunks and rocks, heedless of everything but the fiery torture which enveloped him. Gradually the hornets fell away from him as he went, knowing that their vengeance

was accomplished. At last, groping his way blindly into a crevice between two rocks, he thrust his head down into the moss, and there, a few days later, his swollen body was found by a foraging lynx. The lynx was hungry, but she only sniffed at the carcass and turned away with a growl of disappointment and suspicion. The carcass was too full of poison even for her not too discriminating palate.

Mustela, meanwhile, having the best and sharpest of reasons for not delaying in his flight, knew nothing of the fate of his pursuer. He only became aware, after some minutes, that he was no longer pursued. Incredulous at first, he at length came to the conclusion that the fisher had been discouraged by his superior speed and endurance. His heart, though still pounding unduly, swelled with triumph. By way of precaution he made a long detour to come back to his nest, pounced upon and devoured a couple of plump deer-mice on the way, ran up his tree and slipped comfortably into his hole, and curled up to sleep with the feeling of a day well spent. He had fed full, he had robbed his fellows successfully, he had drunk the blood of his victims, he had outwitted or eluded his enemies. As for his friends, he had none—a fact which to Mustela of the Lone Hand was of no concern whatever.

Now, as the summer waned, and the first keen touch of autumn set the wilderness aflame with the scarlet of maple and sumach, the pale gold of poplar and birch, Mustela, for all his

abounding health and prosperous hunting, grew restless with a discontent which he could not understand. Of the coming winter he had no dread. He had passed through several winters, faring well when other prowlers less daring and expert had starved, and finding that deep nest of his in the old tree a snug refuge from the fiercest storms. But now—he knew not why—the nest grew irksome to him, and his familiar hunting-grounds distasteful. Even the eager hunt, the triumphant kill itself, had lost their zest. He forgot to kill except when he was hungry. A strange fever was in his blood, a lust for wandering. And so, one wistful, softly-glowing day of Indian summer, when the violet light that bathed the forest was full of mystery and allurements, he set off on a journey. He had no thought of why he was going, or whither. Nor was he conscious of any haste. When hungry, he stopped to hunt and kill and feed. But he no longer cared to conceal the remnants of his kills, for he dimly realised that he would not be returning. If running waters crossed his path, he swam them. If broad lakes intervened, he skirted them. From time to time he became aware that others of his kind were moving with him, but each one furtive, silent, solitary, self-sufficing, like himself. He heeded them not, nor they him; but all, impelled by one urge which could but be blindly obeyed, kept drifting onward toward the west and north. At length, when the first snows began, Mustela stopped, in a forest not greatly different from that which he had left, but ever wilder, denser, more unvisited by the foot of man. And here, the *Wanderlust* having suddenly left his blood, he found

himself a new hole, lined it warm with moss and dry grasses, and resumed his hunting with all the ancient zest.

Back in Mustela's old hunting-grounds a lonely trapper, finding no more golden sable in his snares, but only mink and lynx and fox, grumbled regretfully:

"The marten hev quit. We'll see no more of 'em round these parts for another ten year."

But he had no notion why they had quit, nor had anyone else—not even Mustela himself.

A Warrior From Bhut

by John Eyton

He was born in a world of white, far up in the mountains—a little shivering thing, no bigger than a mole, in the midst of a camp of dark blanket tents set in the snow. So cold was it that his brothers and sisters did not survive a night, and he had the shelter of his mother's thick warm fur to himself. From the first he was destined for a hard life, for very soon his mother pushed him out into the snow to find his feet, and to depend on his own coat, which grew rapidly. In a fortnight he was no longer a mole, but a little bundle of warm black fur, for all the world like a baby bear; his head was near as big as his body, deeply domed and furred, looming over a small face, with deep-set eyes and a sharp little

black nose. When he opened his mouth to yawn, he showed a red cavern to the world, with the beginnings of strong teeth.

He knew early in life that he was born to one task—to watch—and if a stranger approached the tent he would bark defiantly in imitation of the deep, gruff voices of his father and his mother and his cousins, and would keep on barking, till he was cuffed. He came of a breed of watch-dogs, guards of camp and sheep, terrors of night visitors, be they man or jackal; for, once a Bhutia has taken hold, he, will not let go while life is in him.

He grew apace; within a month he was eighteen inches high, and burly to a degree; his fur stood out straight, and thick as carpet, and his body was so heavy that he tottered as he walked. He had tan points now, on the feet and legs, and jaw, and beneath the eyes. He could worry a bone, too, when he could get it, and was independent of his mother both for food and warmth.

Also, his voice was breaking, the shrill note of childhood giving way to the mastiff bass—and he practised incessantly. He was rolled over daily by his mother to give him muscle, and by his cousins to try his spirit, and he came through the ordeal well. At any rate, he was allowed to live.

Then, one early morning, the camp started for the plains, more than a month's march away. The shaggy, horned sheep were driven into a bunch, and fitted with their little leather saddles and their bundles of merchandise. Then the dogs were called up and the flock driven down the track, while the men

and women followed, laden with blankets and gear, spinning their wool and chattering.

The puppy walked with the rest. The first days of jostling in the narrow path on the hillside, with destruction below, wearied him exceedingly; but soon his muscles grew perforce, and he became deep-chested, and shouldered and seasoned. Soon the intense cold was left behind, and they passed through pine woods, shuffling over a path carpeted with needles, above precipices still steep, with silver streams far below. As they descended, greener and greener grew the hills, till one day they pitched their camp below a warm bazaar on the side of Bhim lake, and saw the plains stretching below. Now the ring of the camp was made smaller, lest leopards should raid the sheep, and the gruff barks of the watchers sounded in the night. By the time the moving camp had dropped into the plains, the puppy had put on the lineaments of maturity on a small scale, he was a dog.

Take a bloodhound, and a mastiff, and an old-time otter-hound, and mingle them in one type; make it massive in body, and sturdy in the legs; make it walk with the silent precision of a leopard—slow, with head lowered, and feet meticulously placed; grow a fine crop of thick fur—and you have a fair specimen of the Bhutia dog. He has the colouring of the old-fashioned otter-hound; the domed head and the furrowed jowl of the bloodhound; and the chest, and jaw of the mastiff—with the tenacity of the devil thrown in. His voice is deep bass, a little muffled; he will advance slowly, like a leopard, then spring

for the neck with the speed and momentum of a charging boar—and there he gets a strangle-hold.

In character he is morose, apt to brood, and cautious until he has made up his mind; his temperament might be described as heavy, and he does not easily make friends. Though in old age he becomes too dangerous for civilized homes, there is no better watch-dog in the world. He owns only one master.

As is the type, so was the puppy—as independent and self-contained as dog could be.

Three years passed in watching. In winter the camp was pitched in a settlement down in the plains, hear the buzz of the bazaar. Then, when the sun grew fierce and a thick coat was becoming intolerable, they went up the winding path through the foot-hills, behind the trotting, saddled sheep, clouded in dust till black coats turned grey; on through the pine woods, where the air was rarer, and vegetation more sparse; where the paths ran rugged and steep, and chakor¹ scuttled down the khud at their coming; where villages were perched in the high hills like rooks' nests, and the sheep had to scramble far among the boulders for their grass ... and so to the beyond which was Bhut; there to await the finishing of the grain from the pack-saddles and the carding of the wool, and to take the road again.

It was a monotonous life, but it suited the temperament of the puppy, and so he might have lived to the end ...

1. Chakor = A species of partridge.

adventureless, save for an occasional growling scuffle with his cousins, when eyes showed red and fur stiffened, and the mastery of the family was at stake. Master he would surely be, sooner or later, for he was a shade taller than the usual run, a trifle more massive, and he had the jaw and teeth of a hyena—you cannot find any stronger.

So might he have lived, content with a limited mastery, if in the fourth year the party had not dipped down from the hills by a new route, and encamped at Tanakpur.

Tanakpur village lies at the very foot of the Himalayas, where the Sarda River breaks free of its mountain gorge and claims a wider bed of shingle and of sand; though the village boasts a railway station, a timber depot, a water tower, and a hospital, it is nevertheless an absolute outpost of British India. For, set on the high bank of the Sarda, it looks across to the wide land of and green forest that is Nepal. The Himalayas tower over it to the north, while southwards the river scores its channels wider and wider amid islands belted with pale sheeshum trees, as it feels for the plains. As far as eye can see to the south, there stretches white shingle, broken only by these frail, fairy trees, guarding the ribbons of blue water. Of all fair prospects at the feet of the great hills, Tanakpur has the fairest.

It is a gathering-place of many types, for it is the railhead for Nepal and for the hills. Today, market day, its bazaar is gay with merchandise—grain from the Terai; oranges and wool

from the hills; brass, in shining pyramids, from Moradabad; bright cottons—crude embroidery—gay caps ... all the finery of the poor.

But the men vary more than do the goods. Rough Nepalese, with high cheek-bones and thick bodies, have crossed in the old ferry-boat—hollowed from a single tree—with their ponies swimming alongside, to barter with shrewd-faced Mohammedan merchants whom the train has brought from Bareilly. There are Paharis from above, and men of the Terai below, yellow with malaria, old before their time, riding listlessly in on their little ponies. Here is a group of smiling Goorkha soldiers discussing tonga-hire with a tall be-medalled Sikh who wears his grey beard in a net. By the liquor-shop there are Tharus—honest men, imported from the Punjab to till the Terai, being strangely fever-proof. Here a new tongue strikes the ear ... soft and pleasing, unlike the hard Hindi of the hills; it is Pushtu, and the speakers have brought their donkeys all the way from Baluchistan for carrying work on the Sarda Dam. Wild men these, clad in loose garments, and walking with the half-veiled insolence of the Pathan. Not unlike them are the camel-men from Meerut, as they lead their staring charges up the crowded street and smoke the long pipe of a peaceful occupation.

But the strangest of all the motley crowd are the two Bhutia men from the far North, who are standing apart and watching. These men are not of India; there is much of the Chinaman in their faces, without his sluggish aspect; combine the high cheek-bones of the Mongolian with the aquiline nose and

sharp look of the North-American Indian, and you are near a description of these two men. Their faces are hairless, and they wear caps of rough leather, turned up all round, with flaps for the ears at night. One wears a couple of cues down his back, while the other has raven hair combed out in a cloud beneath his leathern cap. Their clothing is of rough woollens, and they carry brown blankets over their shoulders, under which peep their cherished necklaces—lumps of amber rough turquoise and cornelian, with pendants of silver and blue. They are twirling their little spindles of wool—for they make their own stuffs—and smiling, when suddenly a hubbub breaks out from the direction of the river below. They listen a moment, as do their neighbour ... then slip quickly away. He of the combed raven hair is the master of our hero, the Bhutia dog.

He had lately been dubbed Sluggard by his master in the language of Bhut for a propensity to claim the privilege of rest for his dignity as head of the family. And Sluggard he looked as he lay that afternoon with his head on his paws, one eye closed and the other set sleepily on the distance across the river. Behind him, the bazaar was all a-clatter, while towards the river the sheep-bells made drowsy tinkling among the trees. All the men were away in the bazaar, and most of the women too, so that he was a solitary sentinel.

Suddenly he heard a stirring among the sheep; an old ram, with jingling bell, fussed into the camp, followed by several

ewes; but beyond, among the sheeshum trees, the clamour still continued, and there were sounds of scuffling and of flight.

He was no sluggard now, as he sprang up with a gruff interrogation; listened for the fraction of a second; then shot from the camp, through the trees and past the scared sheep, to the other side of the belt, where rank green grass bordered the shingle.

Then, all at once, he stopped dead, every nerve a-quiver, every faculty alert, and gave his low, long-drawn challenge. In front of him lay the body of a young ram fresh killed, and beyond the ram, at its throat, lay a leopard, just raising its head from its meal. Back went its ears on the instant, and it grinned angrily, growling as if it were grinding out the sound through a mill, and switching its long tail to and fro.

Like a flash, the Sluggard went in. He made no sound, but simply flew straight for the throat, and when he felt the folds of skin and smelt the acrid smell of leopard, there he stayed. He was picked up, battered, and torn; big as he was, he was shaken like a rat in the enemy's efforts to be free; great teeth snapped at him and bit deep, while the sharp claws ripped his fur and left long lines of blood.

There had never been anything like this thing which he had attacked; weight, muscle, agility—all were against him. But he had one advantage—he had gone in first, and where he had found flesh he would stay.

Growling, snarling, gasping, they rolled over and over, dyeing the loose shingle with blood. The men in the bazaar heard it;

fifty were running with lathis, and a hundred more were listening. But the Sluggard's master was first in the field.

He found them locked together on the very brink of the stream—the dead leopard, and the battered, bloody mass of fur, alive, but barely living. For a long time they could not unlock the Sluggard's jaws. When at last they succeeded, he wagged his tail feebly at his master, and went to sleep.

So, in the hearing of all that motley crowd, gathered from the ends of India, the Sluggard became the champion of his race—the only Bhutia who alone had slain a leopard. From thenceforward the people called him Warrior; but his master called him Friend.

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